

Town of Bethlehem Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Plan – First Draft



IMPORTANT NOTE TO REVIEWERS

1. This is a first draft, a foundation upon which we will build the final plan. **It is not a completed document.**
2. The **content and organization** of this first draft plan is largely based on the questions and issues raised in the NYS Reform & Reinvention Collaborative resource guide, with an emphasis on issues raised by community members.
3. The **Reform & Reinvention Opportunities are intended as prompts** for the final solutions that will come from the community and the Committee, not as pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, our key challenge will be to identify solutions that are clearly connected to, and will have a positive effect on resolving, issues identified through the Collaborative effort.
4. **Please submit suggested changes in writing** to magengast@townofbethlehem.org. First round comments are due by Feb 5, but earlier submissions would be greatly appreciated.
5. **Please note things that you like in addition to things you think should be changed.** With so many reviewers, there's a good chance that someone will request that these be changed too.

THANK YOU!

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INTRODUCTION (by David VanLuven)

On June 8, 2020, more than 1,500 Bethlehem community members demonstrated against racism and police brutality. The vigil began with 8 minutes 46 seconds of silence – the length of time a Minneapolis police officer knelt on the neck of George Floyd – and continued with a spontaneous march through the streets of Delmar.

Four days later, Governor Andrew Cuomo issued an Executive Order that all municipalities with police departments undertake comprehensive Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative processes. The purpose of each Collaborative was to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy between police departments and the communities they serve, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color. The Executive Order set a deadline of April 1, 2021 for local adoption of police reform plans.

While the following pages are intended to meet that planning deadline, they are by no means the completion of the effort to address the challenges identified within them. Black lives matter in Bethlehem – in our government, our schools, and our community – and we are committed to achieving greater justice, equity, and fairness in Bethlehem, not just in words, but in actions.

Collaborative Process

The process for creating this plan has been rigorous. It began with the promotion of Gina Cocchiara to replace Police Chief Lou Corsi, who retired in July, 2020 after decades of dedicated service. The process for hiring Chief Cocchiara was intensive and thorough, spanning several months and involving extensive input from many residents at demonstrations, on social media, and in conversations by email, phone, and in person. It also benefitted from insights from outside law enforcement professionals on department cultures and community relations.

This promotion was an important part of the Collaborative process because Chief Cocchiara took leadership of the Police Dept with an ambitious vision for modernizing its culture. Particular foci have been increasing the emphasis on community policing and forging stronger bonds between our police officers and the residents they protect and serve.

In September, 2020, the Town Supervisor and Town Board passed a strong resolution supporting Black lives (see [Appendix @](#)) and appointed an Advisory Committee to help guide the Collaborative effort. The Committee's two key roles were to (a) ensure that the process was transparent and effectively gathered community experiences and knowledge; and (b) ensure the process identified and addressed patterns of racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.

The 19-member Advisory Committee was composed of residents with a wide range of experiences and perspectives, and a common commitment to working with the Police Dept to address challenges and support its strengths. A list of Advisory Committee members and their bios is included in [Appendix \\$](#).

From October through December, 2020, the Advisory Committee met 5 times with each meeting focused on a different topic: process and purpose, transparency, traffic enforcement, Use of Force, and School Resource Officers. Community members were able to participate in these meetings during a Public Comment period at the end of each, and also in 3 community forums

(see Figure 2). All meetings were broadcast live, and all meetings were recorded with links available for each on the Town website.

Community Members

Early in the Collaborative process, the Advisory Committee discussed who beyond the Police Dept should be considered in the plan. As systemic racism and inherent bias affect everyone in Bethlehem, the Committee concluded that the experiences and concerns of everyone, whether they were residents or visitors to the town, were important and relevant. Throughout this plan, therefore, the term “community member” means everyone in Bethlehem, inclusive of residents, visitors, shoppers, employees and business owners, and people just passing through.

Plan Format & Content

The content and organization of this plan is largely based on the questions and issues raised in the [NYS Reform & Reinvention Collaborative resource guide](#), with an emphasis on issues raised by community members. To prepare this plan, we worked through about 100 questions raised in the Guide grouped largely around the issues of the Police Dept’s current roles, policies and practices, culture, personnel, training, and officer wellbeing.

There are two keys to this plan being useful. First, it should clearly identify challenges that need to be addressed. Second, it should identify potential actions that can overcome those challenges. While this is simple in concept, plans often drift from these keys to identify solutions that are not connected to specific issues needing attention, and to flag issues without noting potential actions for addressing them. This plan, therefore, is structured around key issue areas, with **Reform & Reinvention Opportunities** noted at the end of each section that are specifically connected to the issues.

Implementation

More important than the content of a plan like this is implementation of the opportunities identified within it. This plan was created with extensive opportunity for community involvement and with the full support of the Police Dept. Bethlehem therefore has commitment from the community, commitment by the Town’s elected officials, and commitment from the Police Dept to implement the plan’s recommendations. Beyond that, we must regularly review progress on the plan together, identify what is and is not working, and adapt our strategies accordingly.

This is a historic opportunity for Bethlehem. We have a common dedication to anti-racism and are increasingly recognizing that systemic racism and inherent bias are local as well as national problems. We have a new Police Chief committed to the Collaborative effort and to positive change within the Police Dept. We cannot let this moment pass with nothing more than words.



COMMUNITY MEETINGS	
Oct 15, 2020	Advisory Committee #1
Oct 29, 2020	Community Forum #1
Nov 9, 2020	Advisory Committee #2
Nov 12, 2020	Community Forum #2
Nov 19, 2020	Advisory Committee #3
Dec 3, 2020	Community Forum #3
Dec 10, 2020	Advisory Committee #4
Dec 17, 2020	Advisory Committee #5

Figure 2. Public meetings for the Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BETHLEHEM POLICE DEPT (by Susan Leath)

Law and order has been a source of concern for Bethlehem residents since the town's organization in 1794. That year six constables were elected at the annual meeting: John J. Van Derheyden, Milan Warner, Elisha Wyncoop, Hugh McKnab, Den Dimmick, and Claus Karkner. Constables, like modern day police officers, were charged with keeping the peace and maintaining public order.

By the early 1900s, the Town Board was appointing constables, one of whom, in 1924, was David R. Main. Main served until his death in 1949 becoming well known for patrolling the Four Corners on foot with his white bulldog at his side. His cases were frequently mentioned in the newspapers, from rounding up lost heifers in South Bethlehem to dealing with an aggressive "cat burglar" who was breaking into homes in Delmar, Elsmere, and beyond. He described that criminal as the meanest burglar he had ever had to contend with. Missing persons, peeping toms, and fire investigations are all mentioned.

In 1941, the town transitioned from a constabulary to a formal Police Department, with Main appointed the first chief. Also transitioning over were constables, now patrolmen, C. Arthur Blodgett and John A. Hotaling. A police department of three was deemed sufficient by the Town Board for the growing suburbs of Delmar, Elsmere, and Slingerlands, and the more rural Glenmont, South Bethlehem, and Selkirk. Officers worked closely with the New York State Police on keeping the proverbial peace. The Bethlehem Police Dept has gone on to grow and professionalize. It became one of the first to be accredited by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program in 1990, a recognition that is still in place today.

Bethlehem residents' concern for law and order was also realized in two different mutual aid organizations: the Bethlehem Conscript Society and the Bethlehem Mutual Protective Association.

The Bethlehem Conscript Society was organized in 1874 to pursue and recover horses and wagons stolen from members. The Society met for at least 20 years as evidenced by their August 31, 1895 annual meeting announced in the *Coeyman's Herald*. Such banding together for the mutual aid was not that unusual in rural, upstate New York.

The Bethlehem Mutual Protective Association was incorporated in 1909 with the express purpose of guarding against theft, trespass, and malicious mischief. At the beginning there were several hundred members, most of whom were farmers, from Coeymans, Bethlehem, and New Scotland. A snippet in the October 28, 1910 *Altamont Enterprise* sums up why someone would join the group. "Mr. Van Wie was unfortunate in having his horse stolen last Wednesday night, but had the good fortune to recover the horse and outfit after considerable trouble and expense. He contemplates joining the Bethlehem Mutual Protective Association."

The group pursued offenders both big and small, sometimes offering rewards, like the \$50 offered in 1911 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the parties who stole the chickens from John Patterson, Glenmont, or the \$50 offered in 1914 for the person who stole the

This brief history relates readily available historical information about Bethlehem's Police Dept. It does not delve into potential connections to slave patrols, disproportionate policing of communities of color in town, or the underground railroad in Bethlehem. The Collaborative timeline is just too short for that level of research. Hopefully, interested community members will be inspired to research these important issues further and help us better understand our community's past.

horse from the pasture of Elisha Stoff. They were active in the apprehension of Chicken Charlie, Charles Rathke, an unrepentant chick stealer. 1917 brought a rash of “automobile parties with motor cars, cycles, and hunters making raids upon orchards and gardens and helping themselves to fruits and vegetables.” Drugstore robberies and blanket thefts are also mentioned in the papers.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF POLICING IN THE UNITED STATES

(by Dr. Roxanne Booth)

Policing is defined as the maintenance of law and order by a police force. In the 1830s, the first publicly funded and supported police force in the United States was in Boston, MA. By the 1890s, every major city in the United States had a police force. However, prior to the publicly funded and supported professional police forces, watch guards, militias, and community watch patrols carried out the semblance of law and order.

As early as the 1790s, southern cities like Charleston, SC created watch guards to primarily control the movement of the enslaved population. In Charleston, the enslaved population outnumbered the white population 3 to 1 and the whites were terrified about the possibility of uprisings and revolts by the enslaved. The Watch Guards made sure that the enslaved population was being monitored and controlled. The Watch Guards patrolled the movements of the enslaved and by 1850, under the Fugitive Slave Act, became bounty hunters locating what were called “runaways.”

During Reconstruction (1865-1877) and Jim Crow segregation (1878 -1965), police forces reinforced the practices of the Watch Guards in both the North and the South primarily controlling and monitoring the movements of African Americans. The Civil Rights era ushered in extensive policing of African American communities. During this time, police forces were infiltrated by and recruited members of the Ku Klux Klan.

Following the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, riots erupted in many cities throughout the United States. Police forces in these places began using aggressive dispersion tactics, such as police dogs and fire hoses, against individuals in peaceful protests and sit-ins. These widely publicized examples of police brutality along with pervasive violent policing in communities of color fostered growing distrust at a local, everyday level between communities of color and the police.

By the 1990s, policing was militarized through the purchase of US Defense Department weaponry to be used at the local level. The 1033 Program was instituted in 1997 under the Clinton administration to bolster the police forces’ ability to fight the war on drugs. In 2014, the program was spotlighted by the militarized police response to Black Lives Matters protest in Ferguson, MO, following the police shooting of Michael Brown. The Obama administration placed some restrictions of the types of items that could be transferred to police departments. However, these restrictions were lifted by the Trump administration in 2017.

Policing today can be summarized in this excerpt from the 2015 New York University Law Review article “[Democratic Policing](#)” by Barry Friedman which analyzes the problem of the “democratic vacuum” in American policing, and argues for greater public involvement in police rulemaking:

“Policing agencies are authorized by breathtakingly broad delegations of power, and there is virtually no process that ensures democratic input into the means by which they go about their tasks. As a result, policing suffers from a failure of democratic accountability, of policy rationality, of transparency, and of oversight

that would never be tolerated for any other agency of executive government. It is this democracy deficit that drives the need for policy reform. . . . Rather than attempting to regulate policing primarily post hoc through episodic exclusion motions or the occasional action for money damages, policing policies and practices should be governed through transparent democratic processes such as legislative authorization and public rulemaking.”

APPROACHES TO POLICING (by Katie Yezzi)

Warrior Vs. Guardian Mindset

One of the key dynamics currently playing out in the culture of police forces across our country today is that of the “Warrior vs. Guardian” mindset.

The warrior mindset is characterized by a focus on survival in the most demanding circumstances, a hypervigilance while in any situation, fear of possible violence, and a potential militarizing of the police force. It has been noted that while there are specific trainings or situations for which a warrior mindset would be necessary, in some police departments, this has become the broad mindset applied to their work in general. When applied broadly, this approach warns officers to see potential danger in each interaction and to worry about surviving each day. This approach drives a wedge between police and the community, with police seeking to maintain a safe distance from the communities in which they work. This shift in police culture has led to a lack of trust from the citizens they are seeking to serve (Florida State University. ["Data-driven evidence on warrior vs. guardian policing."](#) ScienceDaily, 26 February 2019).

By contrast, the guardian mindset places service above all other functions. This mindset places less focus on crime-fighting and more on protecting the whole community. In his 2015 Harvard Law Review Forum article entitled, [“Law Enforcement’s ‘Warrior’ Problem,”](#) Seth Stoughton explains that the guardian mindset,

“...instructs officers that their interactions with community members must be more than legally justified, they must also be empowering, fair, respectful, and considerate. The guardian mindset emphasizes communication over commands, cooperation over compliance, and legitimacy over authority. And in the use-of-force context, the Guardian emphasizes patience and restraint over control, stability over action.”

The police departments that build a culture around the guardian mindset focus on building relationships with those they serve and interact with each day.

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice is a concept at the center of rebuilding and maintaining trust with the community, of fulfilling the ideals of community policing, and of moving towards a guardian mindset. Leading voices in law enforcement reform, Sue Rahr and Stephen K. Rice, state,

“The research tells us that, despite three decades of falling crime rates – and improved training, technology and tactics – public trust in the police has not improved. Instead, empirical assessments of trust and confidence in the police have remained generally unchanged in recent years. It turns out that people don’t care as much about crime rates as they do about how they are treated by the police. This phenomenon, known in academic circles as procedural justice, is regularly practiced and understood by effective and respected beat officers. The public knows it when they see it.” (Rahr, Sue and Stephen K. Rice. [From Warriors to Guardians: Recommitting American Police Culture to Democratic](#)

[Ideals](#). *New Perspectives in Policing*. Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety. April 2015.)

Procedural justice is explained through four pillars, laid out by the [Task Force on 21st Century Policing](#) and included in the [NYS Reform & Reinvention Collaborative resource guide](#):

- 1) Treating individuals with dignity and respect;
- 2) Giving individuals a voice during law enforcement interactions;
- 3) Practicing neutrality and transparency in decision making; and
- 4) Conveying trustworthy motives.

When individuals are treated in just ways by law enforcement, it increases their trust in police and investment in the laws of the community, even if the outcome is not in their favor. As stated in the NYS Reform & Reinvention Collaborative resource guide, when procedural justice is used, “The community, in turn, is more likely to follow the law because it has trust in the criminal justice process and feels that it shares common values with law enforcement.”

A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO POLICING (by Jaye Holly)

The experience of trauma has serious implications both on police officers and on the public they are sworn to serve and protect. According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#),

“an event, or series of events, that causes moderate to severe stress reactions, is called a traumatic event. Traumatic events are characterized by a sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of serious injury or death.”

Symptoms of trauma can include poor concentration, lack of focus, intrusive thoughts, emotional dysregulation, detachment from others, irritability, increased aggression, and self-destructive behaviors, to name just a few. Untreated trauma, whether from one’s personal life or through on-the-job exposure, can contribute to escalation of dangerous events. Even the most well trained and experienced officers can succumb to the impacts of trauma.

As noted in a previous section, there is a trauma history between communities of color and the police. Racism is deeply embedded in the fabric of American society, and our systems and institutions are a reflection of that history. For example, the police badges of today, which are intended to be a symbol of those who “protect and serve,” evolved from the badges that slave catchers used. From the very founding of our country, law enforcement has often not been there to protect or serve people of color, but to be weaponized against them. Names of infamous police officers like Bull Connor and Derrick Chauvin stand out in our collective memories, but the experiences of so many people of color, in particular Black men, in their interactions with police have been so traumatizing that there is little trust of police in many communities. Where there is no trust, there is little opportunity for collaboration and police need collaboration from community members in order to do their jobs effectively. Abuses of power and abject racism nationally have left deep wounds in community relations locally which will continue to fester until they are healed.

Police officers regularly interact with members of the public who may have experienced trauma. The [CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) Study](#) was the first to demonstrate how widespread the experiences of childhood trauma are, with more than 2/3 of adults indicating they had experienced trauma as a child. There is also a strong correlation between those childhood experiences and mental and physical health outcomes in adults. The CDC has continued to study this through the [Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System](#), finding that 61% of respondents have experienced at least one ACE, while one in six respondents have experienced at least four ACEs. ACEs are correlated with many conditions and behaviors that

make it likely that individuals will come into contact with police, including substance use, fighting, intimate partner violence, mental health crises, heart disease, and depression/suicidality.

It is important to note that not only are people who have experienced multiple or complex trauma likely to find themselves in contact with the police, the situations which have garnered police presence are likely to be traumatizing events. Therefore, for many people, the mere presence of the police is a connection to trauma.

Additionally, those who work in professions in which they are repeatedly exposed to the trauma of others, such as police officers, are vulnerable to vicarious trauma. Vicarious trauma has a cumulative effect which builds over time, significantly altering one's world view. In other words, it changes who they perceive themselves to be and how they perceive the world around them. Trauma therefore is not only a vital consideration for police officers interacting with community members, it can be a vital factor in how police officers view themselves.

WHAT & WHO IS OUR POLICE DEPT?

Bethlehem’s police officers are part of our community. They are our neighbors. Their children are in classrooms beside our own. Their families work in local businesses. They coach teams, volunteer as fire fighters, and so much more.

The Bethlehem Police Department is structured around three divisions: Patrol, Special Services, and Headquarters.

- The **Patrol Division** consists of uniformed officers who respond to calls for service from the community, patrol neighborhoods, and ensure road safety.
- The **Special Services Division** comprises plain-clothes detectives who investigate felony-level criminal complaints (such as sexual assaults, arson, identity theft, burglaries, and narcotics). They also investigate all deaths. The Division’s School Resource Officers follow up on most domestic incidents initially handled by Patrol. They also investigate juvenile cases and provide guidance and education in schools. Animal Control responds to calls involving animals in addition to investigating animal cruelty cases with detectives.
- The **Headquarters Division** is staffed by Telecommunicators who dispatch officers, emergency medical services, and fire fighters in response to calls for help.

These divisions are overseen by the Command staff, and are supported by a small administrative team.

As of December, 2020, the Bethlehem Police Dept had 37 sworn officers, down one from 2019 (see [Figure @](#)). This is consistent with Capital Region municipalities with similar population sizes except for Saratoga Springs, which has roughly twice as many sworn officers

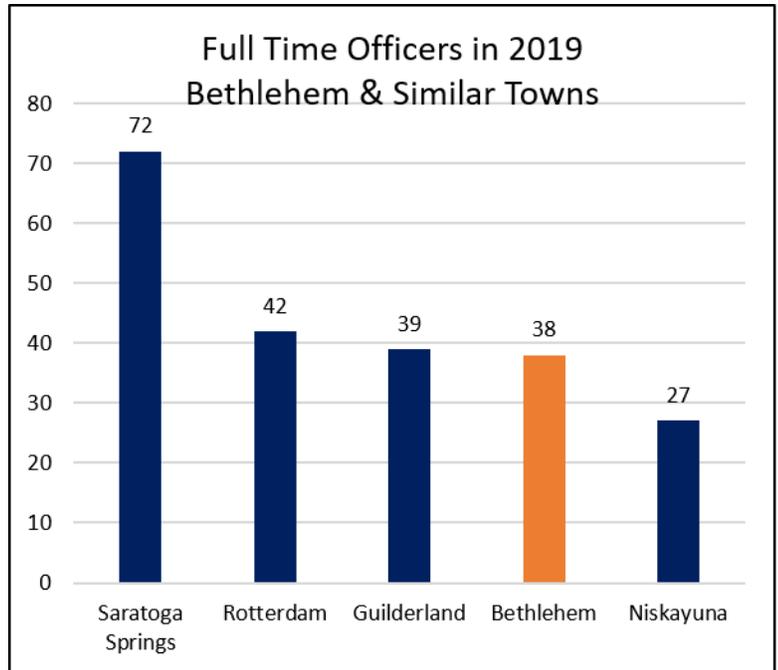


Figure @. Full-time sworn police officers in Capital Region municipalities with similar population sizes to Bethlehem. In 2020, the Bethlehem Police Dept had 37 full time officers, down one from 38 in 2019. Data from the [NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services' Law Enforcement Personnel \(5/2020\)](#)

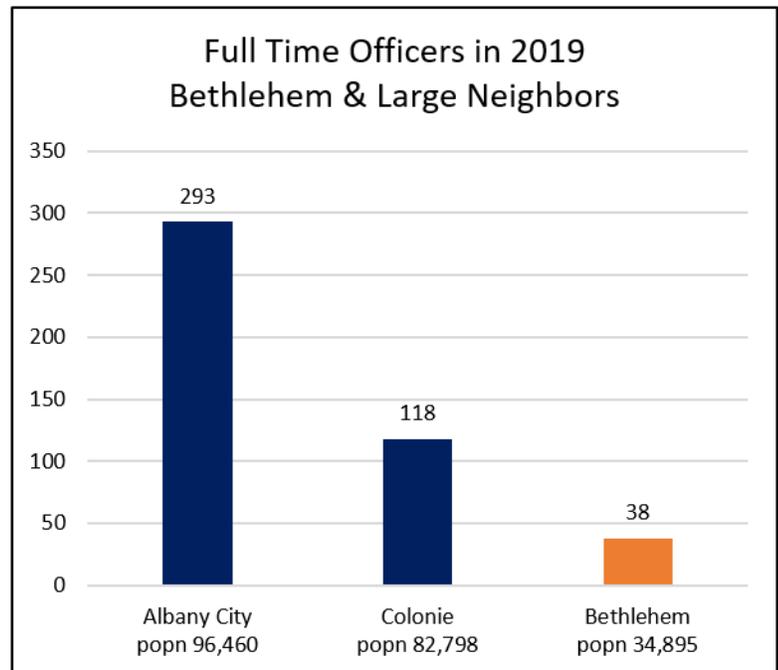


Figure #. Full-time sworn police officers in Bethlehem in comparison to the Town of Colonie and City of Albany. Data from the [NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services' Law Enforcement Personnel \(5/2020\)](#)

despite have a population of 28,212 in 2019 compared to 34,895 in Bethlehem – presumably due to their much larger population of visitors.

Bethlehem's Police Dept is often compared to the Town of Colonie and City of Albany as adjacent neighbors, but these are poor comparisons (see **Figure #**). Colonie is more than twice as large as Bethlehem (with 82,798 residents in 2019) and has more than three times as many officers (with 118 in 2019). The City of Albany is also much larger than Bethlehem (96,460 residents in 2019), is much more demographically diverse, has much greater economic disparities, and has much higher crime rates. These differences are reflected in the Albany Police Dept, which with 293 full-time sworn officers in 2019 is not just 8 times larger than Bethlehem's Police Dept, it has about 70 more officers than the *entire Bethlehem Town government*.

With regard to sex and racial identity, in 2020, Bethlehem's full-time sworn officers consisted of 5 female and 32 male officers, and included 2 Black, 1 Latinx, and 34 white officers.

Diversifying the Police Dept has been a major emphasis in recent years. Since 2014, 12 officers were hired, 9 of whom were people of color or women (these numbers are higher than the numbers above because of officer departures). The Chief of Police, newly promoted in August, 2020, is the first female, openly gay Police Chief in Bethlehem's history, and just the 8th female Police Chief ever hired in the State of New York.

In early 2020, the Town Human Resources Dept did an informal survey of Police Depts in Colonie, Guilderland, and Rotterdam to compare diversity of sworn officers. That review indicated that our Police Dept is more diverse than most: 9 of our 40 (23%) sworn officers were women or people of color, compared to 12 of 114 (11%) in Colonie, 2 of 39 (5%) in Guilderland, and 4 of 39 (10%) in Rotterdam. (Note that the total number of officers in Police Depts varies in the course of a year due to retirements and new hiring, so the total numbers here do not align exactly with those in **Figures @ and #**.)

Bethlehem's police officers come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, including rural towns in the Capital Region, the Bethlehem Central and RCS School Districts, and the South End of Albany. This is important because officers sometimes have to go from a call at a million dollar home directly to a residence that barely has running water. A core principle of the department is that every community member, regardless of their socio-economic background, receives the help they need with respect and courtesy. Further, we believe a diversity of officer backgrounds builds greater empathy with the diversity of our residents' circumstances.

Our Police Dept continues to actively recruit qualified candidates of diverse backgrounds whenever positions open. One of the major challenges to hiring, however, is that the Town of Bethlehem must follow State Civil Service Law, which restricts the officers we consider to the top three candidates on a Civil Service list that is dictated primarily by a test score, or to candidates who are already sworn police officers. The Town cannot legally violate this law, despite the drawbacks that come with this antiquated system. Although the NYS Reform & Reinvention Collaborative resource guide recommends expanding selection criteria and some written and physical tests, it is State law that prohibits municipalities from doing this.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Partner with other municipalities, police unions, and community members to advocate for the state legislature and Governor to amend the Civil Service laws to modernize hiring requirements to go beyond test scores.
- Work with high schools in the Guilderland Central, Bethlehem Central, and RCS School Districts to encourage students to consider careers in policing.

IS OUR POLICE DEPT ACCREDITED?

Police departments that meet high State standards can become “accredited” after a rigorous review by the State Division of Criminal Justice Services. Accreditation is a recognition of a department’s professionalism and adherence to State law enforcement standards for:

- Operations (including high-speed pursuits, roadblocks, patrol, and other critical and potentially litigious situations);
- Training (including basic and in-service instruction, training for supervisors, and specialized technical assignments); and
- Administration (including agency organization, fiscal management, personnel practices, and records management).

The Bethlehem Police Dept was first accredited in 1990, and was just the fourth department in New York to receive this recognition. It has been re-accredited every 5 years since then, including in 2020.

WHAT DOES OUR POLICE DEPT DO?

Each year, our Police Dept responds to about 22,000 “incidents.” These incidents are typically in response to calls to 911, which include calls for assistance with domestic violence, drug overdoses, emergency medical situations, and theft. They also include calls for help with flooded basements, stuck cars, noisy neighbors, and much more.

These incidents also include self-initiated activities such as stopping a car for a traffic violation or speaking to someone in an unusual place (like behind a closed business at night). These activities can also be positive, such as patrol officers handing out ice cream tickets to children they see wearing bicycle helmets, or chatting with residents they are driving by.

Incident Numbers

When 911 calls are made, dispatchers classify the initial call by incident type. Up until 2021, there were 163 different incident types, and these were summarized in the Police Dept’s annual reports. With the transition to a new computer-aided dispatch system in 2021, the number of incident types has been compressed into 52 types.

Incident data can be used to get a general picture of the types of incidents that occur in Bethlehem and their general frequency relative to one another, but they are not of sufficient quality to enable detailed analyses, even across years. This is because the data were never used by the State, Police Dept, or public, so they were not rigorously managed for consistency. Problems with the data include the following.

- **Variations in classifications by dispatchers** – With so many categories, different dispatchers likely classified the same call types into different categories. For example, one dispatcher might classify a call as “Check for a Possible Intoxicated Driver” while another classified it as “Check for an Erratic Vehicle.” This subjective variation likely occurred between calls by the same dispatcher as well.
- **Inconsistent reclassification** – Incidents were not consistently reclassified when the initial information received by the dispatcher at the time of each call turned out to be different from the actual incident officers found at the scene.

Incident data, therefore, show that, each year from 2015-2019, police officers responded to roughly 22,000 incidents each year, and that roughly 16,000 of these were likely to involve direct interactions with community members. Unfortunately, the data are not rigorous enough to answer more detailed questions and should be treated as such. Nonetheless, incident data for 2015-2019 are presented in [Appendix A](#).

Crime Rates

All municipalities report annual data to the State Division of Criminal Justice Services on the number of arrests that are made for crimes within their jurisdictions. Crimes are separated into six categories:

- **Burglary** – entering a building with intent to commit a crime
- **Larceny** – taking or attempting to take another’s property by theft or stealth
- **Theft** – theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle
- **Robbery** – taking or attempting to take anything of value by force, threat of force, or violence
- **Assault** – injuring someone without legal justification
- **Rape** – engaging in non-consensual sex
- **Murder** – causing the death of another person (includes manslaughter)

Burglary, larceny, and theft are considered to be property crimes. Because they involve physical violence against another person, robbery, assault, rape, and murder are considered to be violent crimes.

The crime rates in Bethlehem, like those in Capital Region municipalities of similar size, tend to be low, but they do occur (see [Figure 5](#)).

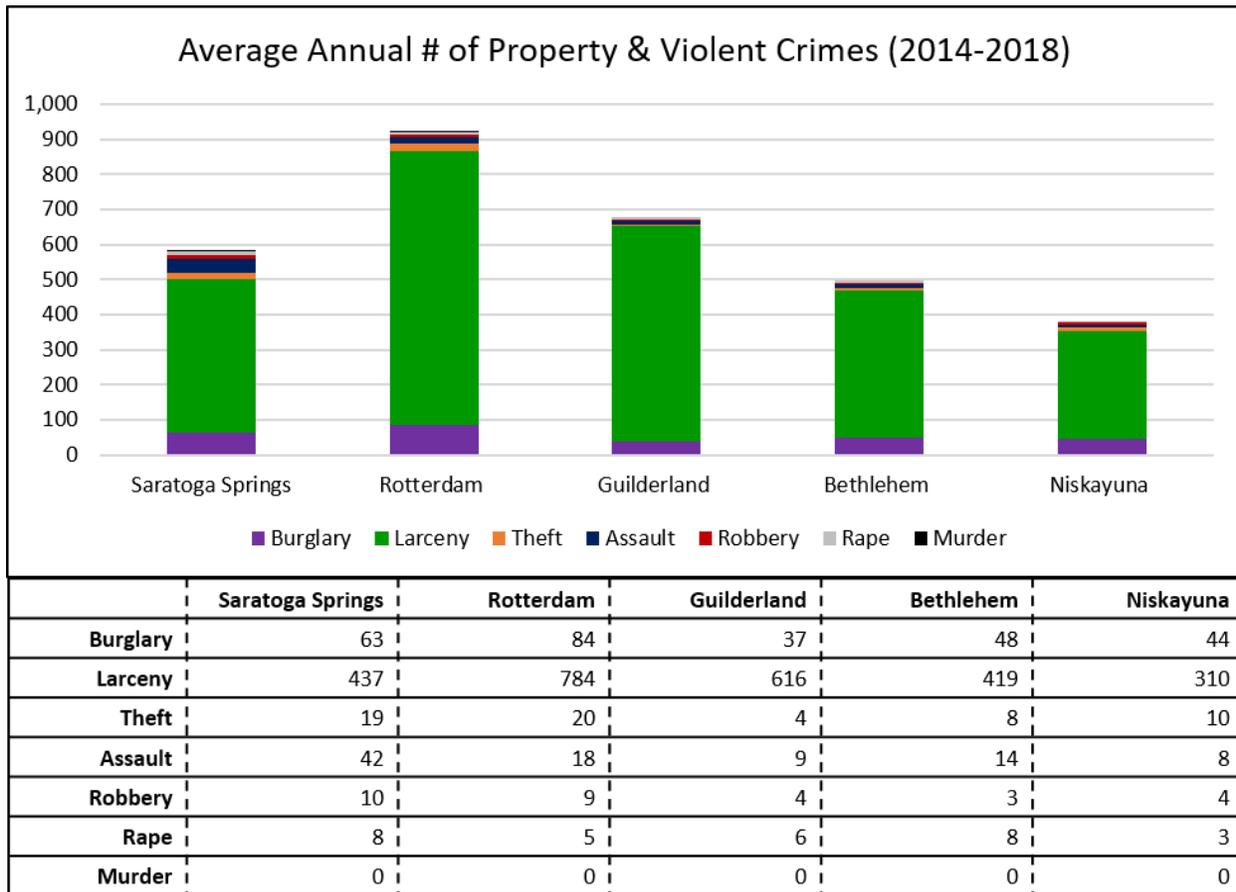


Figure S. Crimes reported 2014-2018 for Capital Region communities of similar size to Bethlehem. Data from the [NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services' Index of Crimes Reported 2014-2018](#)

Hate Crimes

The Bethlehem Police Dept is alert to hate crimes, and after investigations submits these cases to the State Division of Criminal Justice Services for confirmation and mandatory reporting. According to the State Anti-Hate Crime Resource Guide, in New York,

“A hate crime is a traditional offense that is motivated by bias. A person commits a hate crime when one of a specified set of crimes is committed targeting a victim because of a perception or belief about their race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation, or when such an act is committed as a result of that type of perception or belief. These crimes can target an individual, a group of individuals or public or private property.” ([NYS Anti-Hate Crime Resource Guide](#))

From 2015-2019, 3 people were arrested in Bethlehem for hate crimes: 2 in 2018 and 1 in 2019. The first 2018 incident involved criminal mischief with hate speech at Henry Hudson Park. Unfortunately, this case remains unsolved. The second 2018 incident involved aggravated harassment as a hate crime and making a terrorist threat against a local church. A suspect was arrested and the case against them is still pending. The 2019 incident involved aggravated harassment against a local business owner of Middle Eastern descent. The victim in this case declined prosecution against the suspect.

The Police Dept submits monthly Hate Crime Incident Reports as required by State law, though the incidents noted above do not appear in the State database due to the way reports are required to be made. When an officer investigates a crime, the original report will be labelled with the

reported crime, then supplemental reports will be completed with new information as the investigation continues or an arrest is made. For example, if someone committed grand larceny against an elderly resident, the initial report would be for grand larceny. When the case is taken over by a detective (who handles felony cases), they may determine that it is a hate crime. But since the initial report did not list it as a hate crime, the incident is not captured in the State database.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Identify key questions that need to be answered about incidents and the data that would be needed to answer those questions, then set up mechanisms for gathering and processing those data into useful information.
- Standardize incident data management practices to make the data more robust and useful.

HOW ARE 911 & OTHER CALLS HANDLED?

Most police officer actions begin when community members call 911 or the Police Dept's regular 10-digit phone number. Dispatching is a vital and difficult job in the Bethlehem Police Dept, as dispatchers are typically the first people to be contacted in emergency situations, and they need to be able to gather the right information (often from distressed community members) and relay that information to emergency responders who are typically a combination of police officers, emergency medical staff, and fire fighters.

Dispatchers in Bethlehem's telecommunications center receive about 4 months of specialized training in communications, emergency medical dispatch, CPR, and related services. State protocols require dispatchers to be recertified in emergency medical dispatch every two years. This training is enhanced with on-the-job training which pairs new dispatchers with experienced dispatchers to work on call taking, speaking with difficult callers, and the correct questions to ask in different emergency scenarios. Dispatchers often need to make split second decisions that affect the safety of community members and of responding police officers and emergency workers.

The types of calls received by the telecommunications center are wide ranging. Some are straightforward, such as older residents who cannot open medicine bottles and flooded basements. Others are active crises, such as despondent community members considering suicide, major car crashes, and domestic incidents. As noted above, the telecommunications center averaged 22,000 calls from community members each year from 2015-2019.

A scenario of concern raised by community members during the Collaborative process was residents calling 911 to report suspicious persons. The Town does not have data indicating how many of these calls identified the race of the alleged suspicious person or people, or of the person making the call. Anecdotal observations by police officers, however, indicate that these calls are typically white callers expressing concern about community members of color. Further, these anecdotes often note that the alleged suspicious person was frequently either a resident in the neighborhood or someone visiting a neighborhood resident (e.g., a friend of a college student visiting over school break).

From the perspective of the Collaborative mandate, there are three key considerations relating to police dispatching.

1. It is the policy of our Police Dept to respond to all calls. Part of this policy is rooted in the desire to support community members, and part is rooted in the legal responsibility that Police Depts assume when 911 calls are received.
2. Our Police Dept needs to ensure that 911 responses do not result in inappropriate Use of Force incidents. This is particularly important for mental health crises where additional support from mental health and behavioral specialists, such as those with the Albany County Mobil Crisis Team, would help officers and community members alike.
3. Our Police Dept and our community need to find ways to protect people of color, whether residents or visitors, from unwarranted interactions with police officers simply because racism or unconscious racial bias in the community leads neighbors to call 911.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- It would be greatly beneficial for our police officers to have social workers and mental health specialists available for mental health calls. One potential model would be to have this service provided to all area municipalities through expansion of the Albany County Mobil Crisis Team.
- What can we do to protect people of color in our community from neighbors reporting them to the police?

HOW IS TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT HANDLED & WHO IS BEING STOPPED?

Traffic enforcement is a major police activity that is not done in response to calls from community members. The purpose of traffic enforcement in Bethlehem is ensuring our roads are safe for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians alike. Our goal is to use enforcement and education to decrease crashes, deter aggressive driving, and ensure vehicles are in compliance with State and Town traffic laws (e.g., inspections, insurance, registration, etc.). Generating revenues for the Town is NOT a goal.

Traffic Stops & Tickets

Traffic enforcement is focused on areas that have the highest crash rates. These tend to be State roads which have heavier traffic volumes and higher speed limits, particularly Rte 9W, River Rd, and Delaware Ave (see [Figure &](#)).

Enforcement is also undertaken on other roads throughout town to help keep speeds down and in response to resident complaints about traffic issues (usually speeding).

Officers currently and historically gathered all data required by the State. For traffic enforcement, these requirements included:

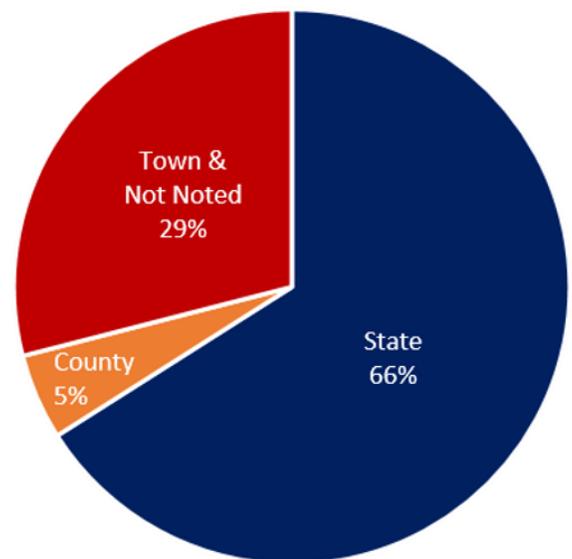


Figure & Road types where tickets have been issued by Bethlehem police officers. Percentages are based on the total number of tickets issued, not the number of stops made, between January 2015 and October 2020. Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

- Location of the stop
- Officer making the traffic stop
- Number of tickets issued and for what violations (multiple tickets are issued when there are multiple violations, which is not uncommon)
- Age of the alleged violator
- Gender of the alleged violator

The race of the alleged violator was only noted when tickets were issued, and even this was inconsistent in the past as it has been an optional rather than a mandatory data field. Further, the determination of race is based on the officer's perception. The computer system does not automatically fill this data category as it does for some other fields, and alleged violators are not asked to self-identify their race. In some cases, officers leave this data category blank.

While the Police Dept has tracked the number of traffic-related stops that are made each year (see Figure %), they have not tracked the number of stops that have resulted in tickets. Instead, they have tracked the number of traffic tickets issued (see Figure ^). This is different from the number of stops, because one stop can result in several tickets being issued.

When initiating traffic stops from their vehicles, patrol officers rarely can tell the race of the driver. During the day, light reflecting off car windows and the darker vehicle interior usually reduces vehicle occupants to silhouettes. At night, headlights usually make it impossible to see the interior of the vehicle at all. As a result, patrol officers usually cannot ascertain the racial identity of the driver until they are standing beside the vehicle.

During a traffic stop, officers are given discretion on whether or not to issue a ticket. Typically, officers consider the following during stops:

- severity of the alleged violation (tickets must be issued for misdemeanors such as lack of insurance, driving with a suspended or revoked license, and driving while intoxicated)
- demeanor of alleged violator
- explanation given by alleged violator
- whether the Town is participating in a statewide zero-tolerance event organized by the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee

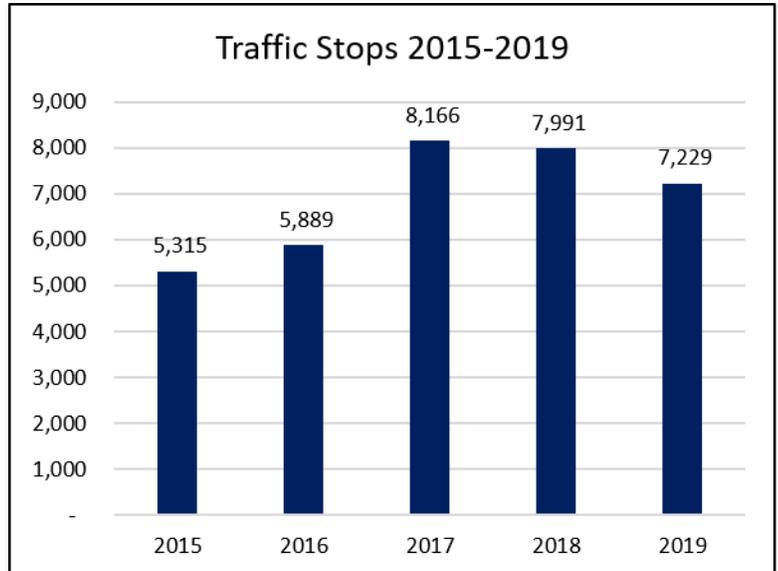


Figure %. Stops made by the Bethlehem Police Dept only (stops made by the State Police and County Sherriff's Dept are not included). Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

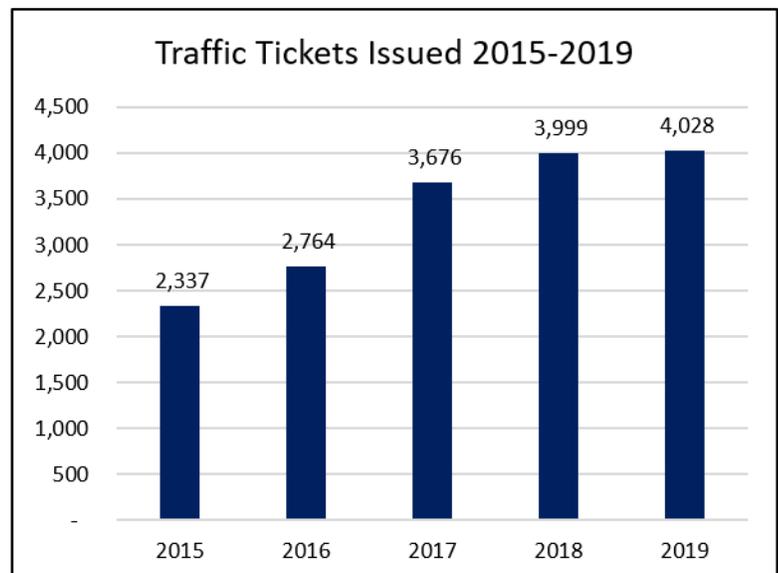


Figure ^. Tickets issued by the Bethlehem Police Dept only (tickets issued by State Police and County Sherriff's Dept are not included). Data indicate the number of tickets issued, not the number of people issued tickets. Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

Automatic License Plate Readers

Automatic license plate readers mounted on some Bethlehem patrol cars scan license plates and feed the numbers into a computerized system to identify misdemeanor- and felony-level offenses such as stolen vehicles, stolen plates, wanted suspects, and suspended registrations. They also provide information during Amber Alerts (for missing children) and Silver Alerts (for missing vulnerable people). Our Police Dept uses the readers to help identify stolen vehicles, flag vehicles with suspended registrations, and apprehend suspects wanted for court-issued warrants.

Traffic Ticket Patterns

Looking at the number of tickets given to alleged violators by race, a clear disparity appears when one compares it to the demographics of the Town of Bethlehem. According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), Bethlehem residents from 2012-2017 were 91% white, 2% Black, 4% Asian, and 1% Other (rounding errors result in the total being less than 100%). When tickets were issued from 2015-2019, 69% were issued to alleged violators who were white and 24% to alleged violators who were Black, Hispanic, Asian, or other. Perceived race was not noted for 7% of traffic tickets issued during this 5-year timespan (see [Figure *](#) and [Appendix #](#)).

This is a ticketing pattern that needs to be delved into more deeply, as there are several potential explanations for it.

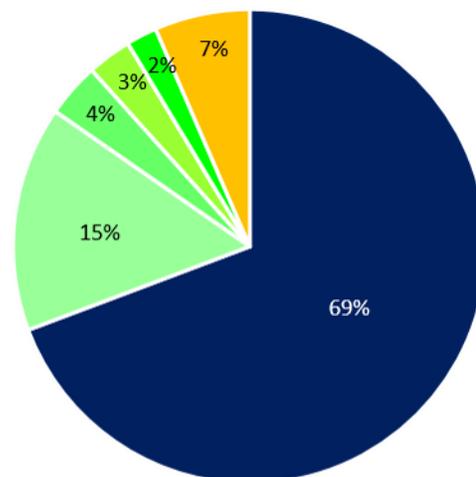
Possibility #1. Officers are deliberately targeting people of color when issuing tickets.

Insights into this possibility could be gained by looking not at the number of tickets issued, but by the number of stops that result in tickets being issued compared to the total number of stops made. This will require all traffic stops from 2021 forward to note the race of the driver stopped, and for data to note the number of stops where tickets are issued in addition to the number of tickets issued.

Possibility #2. Traffic enforcement is mostly taking place in areas where the population of drivers is more racially diverse than the Town of Bethlehem’s residents.

Insights into this possibility could be gained by looking at the geographic locations where stops are made and where tickets are issued (again, separating the number of stops resulting in tickets from the number of tickets issued). There are no data available indicating the race of all drivers on roads, but we may be able to assume that the driving population on major roads adjacent to the City of Albany (which is more racially diverse than Bethlehem) will be more diverse than the driving population adjacent to Guilderland, New Scotland, and Coeymans (whose racial diversity is similar to Bethlehem’s).

Perceived Race of Alleged Violators Issued Traffic Tickets 2015-2019



69% ■ White 15% ■ Black 4% ■ Hispanic
 3% ■ Asian 2% ■ Other 7% ■ Not Reported

Figure *. Data are for tickets issued by the Bethlehem Police Dept and don’t include tickets issued by State Police or County Sherriff’s Dept. Percentage numbers are based on the number of tickets issued, not the number of people issued tickets. **Race categories are defined by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice.**

Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

The focus of traffic enforcement on locations with higher crash rates has historically led to more traffic enforcement on the higher volume, higher speed State roads adjacent to the City of Albany (i.e., River Road, Rte 9W, Rte 85, and Delaware Ave). This, in turn, may be leading to heavier enforcement of a driving population that is more diverse than Town of Bethlehem residents, and in turn disproportionate policing of people of color.

Possibility #3. Traffic enforcement is taking place in areas where drivers are less affluent, and in turn are driving older vehicles that are more likely to receive multiple tickets for violations (e.g., expired inspection, tail lights out, etc.) compared to more affluent drivers in newer vehicles.

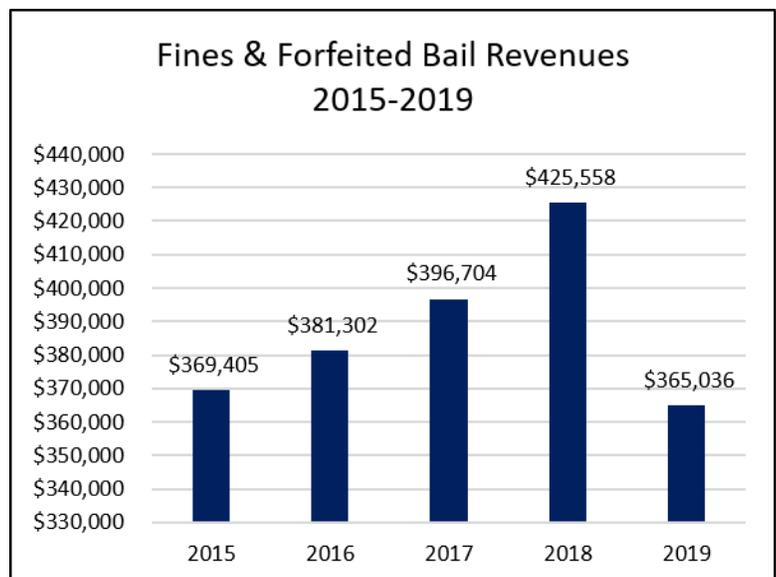
Insights into this possibility could be gained by looking at the race of drivers receiving tickets, the types of tickets being issued, and the geographic location of the stops. The City of Albany is less affluent than Bethlehem, so if drivers from Albany are stopped, we may be able to assume that they are more likely to be driving older cars and thus are more likely to receive multiple tickets.

Traffic Ticket Revenues

Bethlehem police officers are not given ticket quotas. Traffic quotas are illegal under New York State Labor Law 215-a. They are also inconsistent with the Police Dept’s traffic enforcement purpose, which is safety, not revenues. Further, the Town cannot distinguish revenues received from Bethlehem Police Dept tickets from fines and forfeitures from 57 other sources including tickets issued by State Police (who are particularly active on the NYS Thruway) and the Albany County Sheriff’s Dept, DWI special surcharges, parking violations, civil penalties for animal abuse, and surcharges for missed court dates. These fines and fees are handled by the Town Court, which at the end of each month issues a check to the Town Comptroller’s office for the total amount from all sources (see [Figure 1](#)).

Ultimately, all revenues from tickets and forfeitures go into the Town’s General fund and do not affect the Police Dept budget. In fact, these the total fines and forfeitures revenues are a very small part of annual General Fund revenues for the Town. In 2019, for example, the \$365,363 received through all fines and forfeitures constituted 1.7% of the \$21,665,347 General Fund revenues.

In the Town’s annual budgets, revenue projections for Fines & Forfeited Bail revenues are based on numbers from previous years. When the Town Board expects overall revenue shortfalls (like they did for 2021), they do not bump up the projected Fines & Forfeited Bail line to try to close the gap. They also do not direct officers to issue more tickets.



[Figure 1](#). Revenues from 58 different Fines & Forfeited Bail revenue sources, including tickets written by Bethlehem police officers, from 2015-2019.

Data provided by the Bethlehem Town Comptroller’s Office

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Require that the race of alleged traffic violators be recorded for all traffic stops and tickets, ideally with the data field being filled automatically using driver license data.
- Track the number of stops made, sorted by the race of the alleged violators.
- Review data on stops and tickets to get better insights into the causes behind the disparity of tickets issued to people of color compared to the Town of Bethlehem's demographics.
- Gather and review data to see if lower income community members are more likely to be ticketed, perhaps using car ages as a surrogate for income levels.

HOW ARE CALLS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE, MENTAL HEALTH, & HOMELESSNESS HANDLED?

Mental health calls can be some of the most dangerous calls to which our police officers respond, as the behavior of someone in crisis can be unpredictable. These calls can also involve weapons, drug involvement, and serious medical conditions. Many mental health calls come from mental health facilities, medical offices, and psychological services (such as crisis counselors and suicide hotlines) with callers asking for police officers to arrive before mental health professionals to ensure the scene is safe for everyone. Our police officers are usually able to handle mental health calls without criminal arrests.

Our Police Dept is a first-responder to heroin overdose calls because our officers carry Narcan to reverse overdoses, and carry Automated External Defibrillators in case a patient goes into cardiac arrest before emergency medical staff arrive on the scene. With any death, including those resulting from overdoses, our Police Dept conducts investigations to rule out foul play.

Our police officers respond to substance abuse calls because, depending on the circumstances, these incidents can be accompanied by acts of violence. Our officers can also initiate investigations into where the drugs came from and work to stop the drug dealers and prevent further overdoses from happening. It is important to recognize that the State Good Samaritan law protects people who may need medical attention as the result of drug use, and the person reporting the incident, from prosecution except in extreme cases.

Bethlehem police officers respond to calls regarding community members experiencing homelessness to help get them to a safe place with food and shelter, to make referrals to the Homeless & Travelers Aid Society, and to check on their wellbeing. Police interactions with homeless residents usually do not end in arrests. Instead, our officers assess each situation and, when needed, connect the community member to referral agencies and support services. This is particularly important when temperatures drop below freezing. At these times, the State Mental Hygiene Law and Social Services Law require our Police Dept to work with County social service agencies to identify people unwilling or unable to find shelter from the cold, and to offer to move them to an appropriate shelter. Homeless shelters are also required to extend their hours of operation so those without shelter can remain indoors.

Our Police Dept operates 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Our officers are trained to make referrals to other agencies when needed, and to provide assistance in any way they can. The

department draws upon the Albany County Mobil Crisis Team when they are available, though unfortunately sometimes they are not.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- It would be greatly beneficial for our police officers to have social workers and mental health specialists available for mental health calls. One potential model would be to have this service provided to all area municipalities through expansion of the Albany County Mobil Crisis Team.
- Find ways to let more community members know that they can notify the Police Dept about family members with behavioral challenges or special needs who live or work at a particular address. Then, if a call is ever made and the address appears for dispatch, it will be flagged so officers know to be even more mindful and careful when responding and what they might expect when they arrive.

DOES OUR POLICE DEPT PROVIDE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS?

Students from the Town of Bethlehem attend school in three school districts: Guilderland Central, Bethlehem Central, and Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk (RCS).

- The Bethlehem Police Dept has provided D.A.R.E. training in the *Bethlehem Central School District* since 1989, and School Resource Officers (SROs) in their middle and high schools since 1996.
- SROs in the *Guilderland Central School District* are provided by the Guilderland Police Dept.
- The Albany County Sheriff's Dept provides SRO services in the *RCS School District*, though the Bethlehem Police Dept teaches D.A.R.E. courses at the AW Becker Elementary School.
- Our Police Dept also teaches D.A.R.E. classes at the private *St Thomas the Apostle School* in Delmar.

School Resource Officers are resources for students, parents, and school officials. In the Bethlehem Central School District, they are not involved in school discipline. The school administration only brings in an SRO if a crime is alleged (e.g., drug possession, weapons possession, child pornography, sexual misconduct, etc.). They also do not patrol halls looking for violations, or conduct general searches of students.

SROs provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept do walk school halls to ensure that doors are locked and that the educational environment is safe for learning. They work with school staff as information resources regarding incidents occurring in the community, and as experts ready to handle crisis incidents with them on school grounds. They also provide support for school counselors working with families off school grounds, and work with teachers to share real life knowledge and experiences on a variety of topics in classroom presentations. Further, they typically lead investigations involving juveniles that unrelated to schools.

For students, SROs can serve as trusted adults who students can safely talk to about problems at home or in the community. They also give teens an opportunity to see and interact with a police officer as a person, not as a uniformed official who just arrests people. For parents, SROs serve

as discreet and accessible resources who they can talk to about issues at home, and who can help them redirect children away from illegal activities.

The SROs provided to the Bethlehem Central School District are sworn police officers. They receive specialized training in the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services' Basic Juvenile Officers Course (which is 5-days long) and the Basic School Resource Officers Course (which is also 5-days long). SROs may also take additional training courses on specific issues such as domestic violence awareness and diversity.

SROs wear business attire, while D.A.R.E. officers wear patrol uniforms. Both wear sidearms, though the SRO sidearm is smaller and is carried in a more compact holster. The Police Dept's general orders require all officers to possess the necessary equipment to protect and serve the public at all times, including carrying their sidearms when on duty.

The Bethlehem Police Dept and Bethlehem Central School District have not tracked student/SRO interactions or the race of students who interacted with the SROs. Our Police Dept does not oversee SRO services or incidents in the Guilderland Central or RCS School Districts.

The Collaborative Advisory Committee focused on SROs at its December 17, 2020 meeting. The primary issue of concern was whether or not the SROs and D.A.R.E. officers should be armed while in Bethlehem Central schools. The Bethlehem Central School District was represented in the meeting by Mike Klugman, the middle school principal. As the District's representative, he expressed strong support for the presence of SROs in the middle and high schools, and asserted that the school district wanted them to continue wearing sidearms while on duty in the schools.

The presence of SROs and D.A.R.E. instructors from our Police Dept in Bethlehem Central schools is determined by the school district. They dictate which schools have SROs and what those officers do and do not do. They also dictate whether or not the officers are allowed to carry sidearms when inside school buildings. As such, the Collaborative Plan can inform the community about the roles of SROs and D.A.R.E. officers in the Bethlehem Central schools, but it cannot dictate whether or not they are there, what services they provide, or whether or not they wear sidearms. Those decisions would be made by the Bethlehem Central School District administration and Board of Education. Similarly, for Bethlehem residents attending middle and high school in the Guilderland Central and RCS School Districts, these issues would need to be addressed by the school administrations and Boards of Education in those districts (as SRO services there are provided by the Guilderland Police Dept and Albany County Sheriff's Dept, respectively).

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Collect data on the SRO program in the Bethlehem Central School District, and review and share the results annually to help assess its effectiveness.
- Community members work with the school administrators and Boards of Education in the Bethlehem Central, Guilderland Central, and RCS School Districts to consider the appropriate roles of SROs in their middle and high schools, and whether or not SROs should carry sidearms while on school grounds.

HOW DOES OUR POLICE DEPT HANDLE CROWD CONTROL?

Crowd control in Bethlehem is typically limited to large events like the annual Memorial Day Parade, the Turkey Trot road race, the lighting of the menorah and Christmas tree, and First Night festivities. The roles of Bethlehem police officers are primarily emergency planning, site security, and traffic management.

On June 8, 2020, a vigil against racism and police brutality was held in Delmar and was attended by an estimated 1,500 to 1,700 community members. The vigil was followed by a spontaneous march through Delmar, and a second smaller march the following week. On July 4, further demonstrations were held, two in support of Black Lives Matter, the other in support of the police.

The role of our Police Dept during these events was ensuring that demonstrators had safe spaces in which to express their views. For the marches, police officers coordinated with march organizers to close streets and keep traffic away from demonstrators. During the first march, police stationed vehicles close to demonstrators, but this made many marchers feel threatened. For the second march in June, the police pulled their vehicles back to the nearest intersections to keep streets closed and give marchers a more comfortable environment.

For the June 8 vigil and the Fourth of July protests at the Four Corners, police were also dispersed throughout the crowd to ensure that protesters were not disrupted by violence. This was a particular concern for the vigil because of reports of white supremacist groups coming into demonstrations throughout the Capital Region to incite violence.

Bethlehem police officers engaged in crowd control wear their patrol uniforms. The Police Dept does not have surplus military equipment for this purpose (in fact, the only surplus military equipment owned by the department at the time of this writing were 2 night vision goggles that were most commonly used to locate missing and injured community members). The department does not have water cannons, rubber pellets, acoustic weapons, or tear gas. The department does not own riot gear. Helmets and batons are available to officers – in addition to their sidearms, tasers, and pepper spray that are standard gear – but these were not worn during the vigil or any of the demonstrations and marches in 2020.

As noted above, the role of the Police Dept during demonstrations is to ensure that community members have a safe place to express their views. Officers do not in any way police the content of demonstrations, as the First Amendment rights of our community members are essential to our democracy. At the same time, our officers try to work with demonstrators to keep traffic flowing and to respect neighbors who may not be participating in the demonstrations.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Consider “soft look” uniforms that include different shirts or emphasized wearing ballistic vests under the shirts whenever feasible.
- Continue emphasizing, in practice and perhaps explicitly in general operating orders, de-escalation and inter-personal interactions to ensure productive communication with demonstrators and that demonstrations remain safe for everyone involved.

HOW FREQUENT ARE USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS?

Use of Force involves physical actions by an officer towards a suspect. Typical examples in Bethlehem include:

- grabbing and placing a suspect’s hands behind their back to put them in handcuffs while the suspect is actively attempting to prevent the officer from doing so, and
- grabbing a suspect’s shirt to stop them from fleeing.

Use of Force is legally limited to the amount necessary to stop an action or to affect an arrest. It is legally defined in Article 35 of the New York State Penal Law, and its restrictions apply to police and citizens alike.

Bethlehem’s police officers do not use chokeholds or other holds that restrict breathing, as these can be dangerous to suspects. Our officers are trained in safe restraints in accordance with the New York State Police Municipal Training Curriculum.

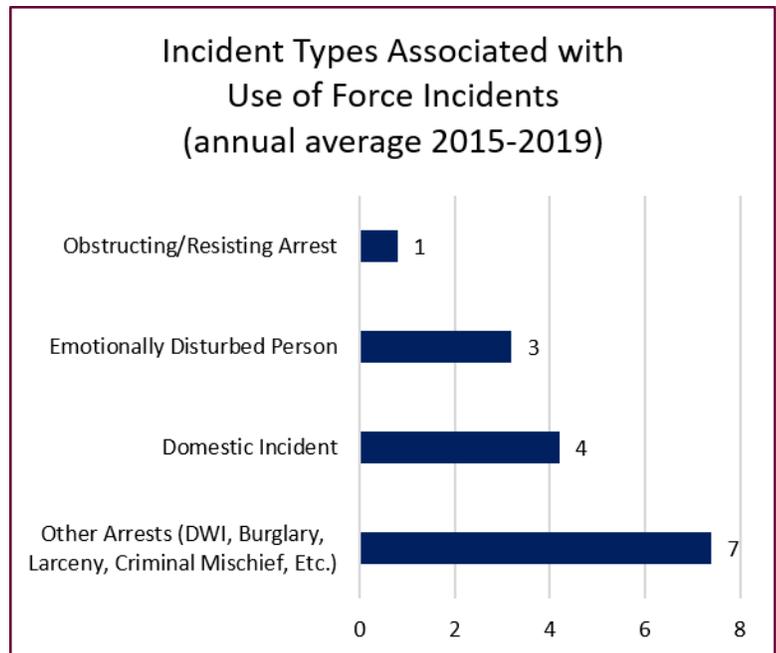
The Bethlehem Police Dept has a Use of Force Policy that is publicly posted on the Town website. It is consistent with NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services model policies and State laws, and meets all State accreditation standards. Key elements of the Use of Force Policy include the following.

- Non-physical actions are always emphasized – Use of Force is the last option, never the first.
- Officers must start at lowest possible level, and move to stronger actions only as required.
- Brandishing a firearm or taser are now considered Uses of Force.
- Anytime a Use of Force incident occurs, a Use of Force Form is completed and forwarded to the officer’s immediate supervisor for review. The report is then reviewed by a Division Commander, and finally by the Chief of Police. In criminal cases, Use of Force incidents are also reviewed by the Albany County District Attorney’s office.

Use of Force Statistics – 2015-2019

Over the 5 years between 2015 and 2019, Use of Force incidents were extremely rare. Of the 16,000 incidents that typically involved interactions with community members each year, on average only 16 escalated to Use of Force incidents annually from 2015-2019. This means that 99.9% of police interactions with community members did not involve Use of Force.

Use of Force incidents stemmed from a variety of call types, but domestic incidents and emotionally disturbed persons were the most common (see [Figure 1](#)).

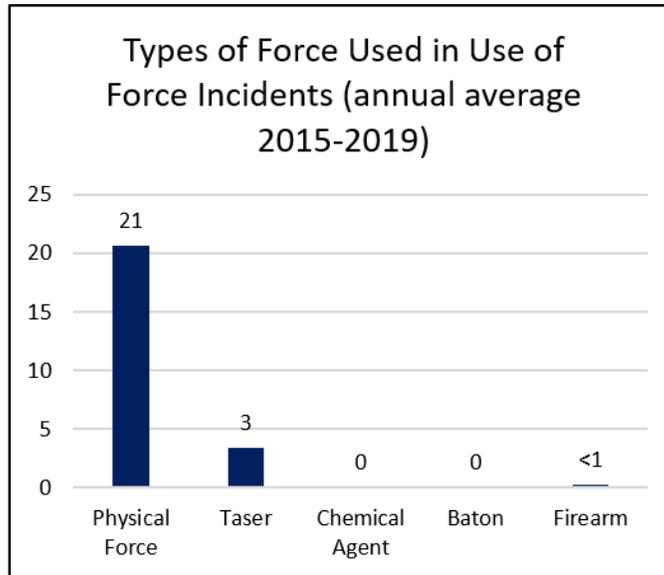


[Figure 1](#). The 5-year average for Use of Force is 15.6 incidents annually, which rounds to 16 incidents in total. For incident types, the individual numbers round down, so the total above looks one short. Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

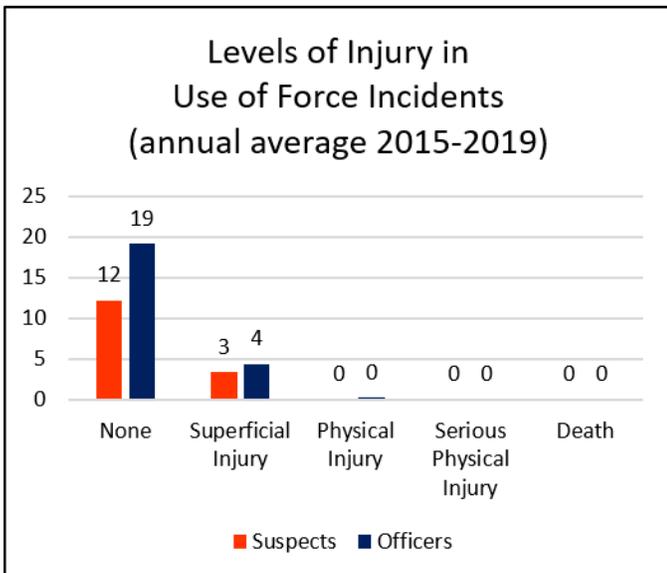
Use of Force incidents rarely go beyond physical force. As noted above, incidents typically consist of (a) grabbing a suspect to place them in handcuffs when they are actively resisting, and (b) grabbing a suspect’s shirt to stop them from fleeing (see [Figure +](#)).

On the rare occasions where Use of Force was necessary from 2015-2019, injuries rarely happened. Superficial injuries were incurred, on average, by only 3 suspects in 16 incidents, and officers were as likely to be injured as suspects (see [Figure \](#)).

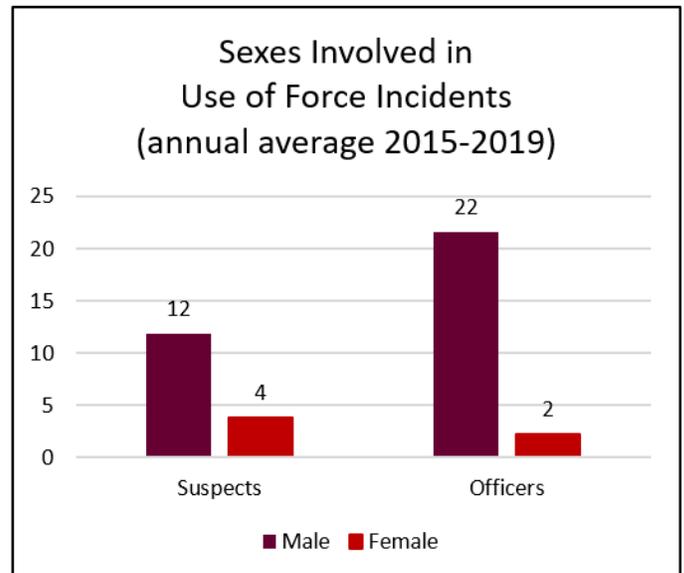
Most Use of Force incidents involve male suspects and male officers, but female suspects and officers are involved too (see [Figure <](#).)]



[Figure +](#). In some incidents, multiple types of force are used. When this happens, each is documented, so the Types of Force used can be more than the Use of Force incidents. Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept



[Figure \](#). The 5-year average for suspects is 15.6 incidents, which rounds to 16 incidents in total. For levels of injury, the individual numbers round down (12.2 for no injury, and 3.4 for superficial injury), so the total above looks one short. Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

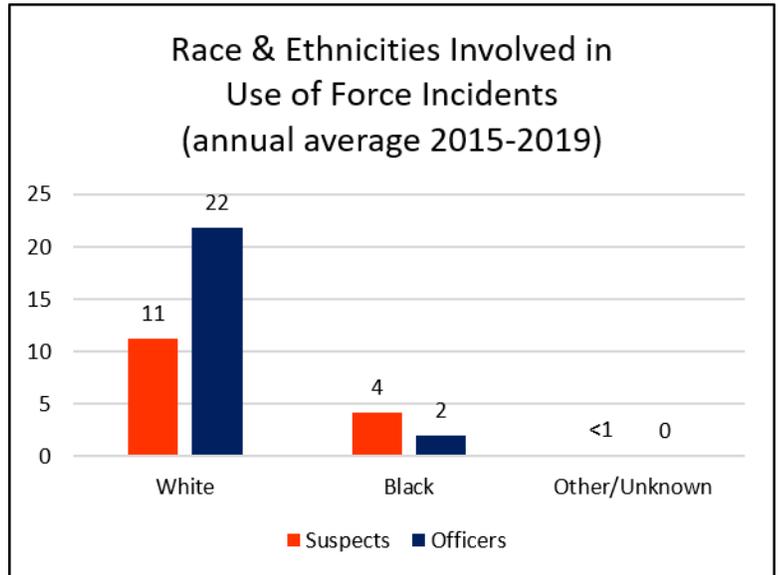


[Figure <](#). The State system only allows sex to be identified as male, female, or unknown/not reported. Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

Most Use of Force incidents involved white officers and suspects, but black suspects and officers were involved too. Of 16,000 incidents that typically involve interactions between police officers and community members, on average 4 Use of Force incidents each year from 2015-2019 involved Black suspects (see [Figure >](#)).

Special Weapons & Tactics (SWAT) Team

The Bethlehem Police Dept does not have a SWAT team. In rare situations that require this level of response, the State Police SWAT team is available and they operate under State protocols. Between 2015 and 2019, the State Police SWAT team was called 3 times. Our Police Dept was able to resolve all of these situations without Use of Force and before the SWAT team arrived. In early 2020, the State Police SWAT team was called to assist with an extended standoff at a residence. The incident was ultimately resolved by trained Bethlehem Police and NY State Police crisis negotiators without Use of Force or the use of chemical agents.



[Figure >](#) The 5-year average for suspects is 15.6 incidents, which rounds to 16 incidents in total. For race, the individual numbers round down (11.2 for white, 4.2 for Black, and 0.2 for other/unknown), so the total above looks one short. Data provided by the Bethlehem Police Dept

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Continue de-escalation training (expanded in 2020).
- Post annual Use of Force statistics on the Police Dept web page to increase transparency and accountability.
- Review past Use of Force incidents to assess whether Black suspects were more likely to experience stronger Use of Force actions than white suspects.
- Involve non-Police Dept individuals, such as a Town Board liaison or community members, in reviews of Use of Force incidents.

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR POLICE OFFICERS?

The Bethlehem Police Dept has Rules of Conduct that are part of the department’s general operating orders; they were last updated in 2002 (see [Appendix *](#)). The Town of Bethlehem also has a Code of Ethics that applies to all Town employees, including police officers, that is part of the [Employee Policy Handbook](#). (see [Appendix %](#)).

Rules of Conduct

The Rules of Conduct are policies and procedures that govern the on- and off-duty conduct of police officers. When developed almost 20 years ago, they were based on standards and guidelines from the State Division of Criminal Justice Services and State law. In addition to

setting strict standards for officer behavior, they set forth a discipline process with tiered punishments ranging from counseling to training to suspension and even termination.

Officer Misconduct

Misconduct typically applies to serious infractions such as brutality and criminal offenses. It does not apply to technical violations such as arriving late for a shift, and is different from public complaints.

There are clear procedures for reporting officer misconduct, and in April 2021 new state laws will mandate that reports of officer misconduct be done directly by the officer and other officers involved in an incident. History has shown that, as a small department, it is extremely difficult for internal reports of misconduct to be kept confidential. With this in mind, the Town has the option of bringing in outside investigators and legal firms for cases where potential retaliation by supervisors is a concern.

Public Complaints (including Use of Force)

Public complaints typically involve patrol officers, which is to be expected given that they are usually first on the scene of conflicts, are responsible for managing tense situations, and have the most frequent interactions with our community. The complaints typically are about a perceived level of professionalism, a training issue, receipt of a ticket instead of a warning, or a lack of action in the direction the complainant wanted. Community members can fill out a formal complaint form, but most do not. Instead, concerned community members typically ask to speak with a supervising Sergeant or command officer, or express their concerns in by email. These rarely continued to submission of formal written complaint forms.

While the Police Dept's Command staff has a good recollection about the types of issues public concerns were typically about, the Police Dept's method for filing complaints has been inconsistent over the years. Before the repeal of Section 50-a of the Civil Rights Law, there were no requirements or expectations that Police Depts would track this information. As a result, we cannot generate numbers about the past frequency of complaints, particular complaint types, or concerns related to race. That said, the Police Dept can definitively note that from 2015-2019, just 1 Use of Force complaint was filed.

Disciplinary Procedures

When the Police Dept receives complaints, whether through formal written forms or less formally through conversations or emails, they are assessed and investigated through a tiered process depending on their severity. These assessments can also be initiated by Police Dept Sergeants and Command staff when they see or hear about potential problems.

- A complaint against an officer is initially directed to their shift sergeant.
- If the complaint is minor (such as slow arrival to a call or rudeness), and if agreeable with the complainant, the matter can be resolved at the shift level.
- If the complaint is serious (such as allegations of corruption, brutality, or civil rights violations), the matter is brought to the attention of the Division Commander, who notifies the Police Chief.
- For complaints that cannot be resolved at the shift level, Command staff will investigate the matter. This investigation, depending on the severity of the claim, can involve verbal or written questioning of the officer involved, and subsequent questioning for further clarification. Investigations can also include checking footage from car cameras, tracking locations using vehicle GPS records, and additional interviews with the complainant and witnesses.

- The Human Resource Dept and Town labor attorney typically participate in investigations, reviews of serious complaints, and internal allegations of misconduct. Very serious situations can proceed to arbitration with union representation for the officer in question.
- Complaints are referred to the District Attorney’s Public Integrity Unit when they involve a violation of law and are found by the Town to have merit. Any use of deadly physical force is automatically reviewed by the District Attorney. Recently enacted State law also dictates that any deadly physical force that results in the death of a non-law enforcement community member be investigated by the NYS Attorney General (whose office actually responds directly to the crime scene).
- Discipline is issued according to the severity of the situation, and can include written reprimand, fines, loss of accrued leave time, suspension, demotion, and dismissal from service.

In all disciplinary proceedings, the officer in question is presumed innocent until proven guilty by the Town. The burden of proof rests upon the Town as the employer, and is the preponderance of evidence on the record, not proof beyond reasonable doubt (which is only used in criminal cases).

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Create multiple avenues for community members to share complaints, including some that allow complaints to be communicated without direct interaction with the Police Dept. Potential avenues could be (a) a more simple complaint form that is posted on the Town website, (b) a dedicated email address for complaints, (c) contact info for the Town Supervisor and a Town Board liaison, (d) contact info for a Community Advocate, and (e) contact info for a Community Advisory Board.
- Create a process for contacting community members who complain to let them know that (a) their concerns were heard, (b) what follow-up is taking place, (c) the timeline for resolution, and (d) outcomes.
- Track the types of complaints received and outcomes, and publish summaries annually to help the community understand the concerns being raised about the Police Dept.
- Send a brief survey to a subset of community members who had interactions with the Police Dept to gauge their level of satisfaction with how incidents were handled, and publish an annual summary of the results.
- Involve non-Police Dept individuals, such as a Town Board member or community members, in reviews of Use of Force incidents and other formal complaints against officers.
- Update the Rules of Conduct so they reflect current police standards, anti-bias, and community concerns. One approach might be to entirely replace the Police Dept’s Rules of Conduct with a comprehensive, updated Code of Ethics for all Town employees.

SHOULD OUR POLICE OFFICERS WEAR BODY CAMERAS?

Police officers in Guilderland and Saratoga Springs currently wear body cameras, while officers in Bethlehem, Niskayuna, and Rotterdam do not. Police officers typically wear body cameras to help document incidents more completely and counter false complaints against officers. They are intended to complement other cameras, such as those in vehicles and within the police

station. Many businesses where incidents occur also have security cameras capturing footage on their properties.

Bethlehem's police unions support body cameras, as they feel the cameras would provide them with corroboration of how incidents were handled and what was said when complaints are made by community members. The Chief of Police also supports the use of body cameras if the community is willing to accept the costs outlined below.

Body cameras carry costs on two fronts. The first is the capital cost of the equipment, including cameras for each patrol officer, a server to manage data downloaded from each camera, and hardware and software to manage these data. The second is the personnel cost for: (a) managing the data from the cameras to ensure that they are correctly catalogued and stored; (b) extracting the correct video and audio records for court cases, community member complaints, and FOIL requests; and (c) redacting video and audio footage that cannot be legally shared publicly (such as the faces of children and nudity). These personnel costs involve both video-data management staff and officers to guide the data management staff through the footage.

The Police Dept, working in consultation with the Town Comptroller's Office and Human Resources Dept, is developing detailed estimates of the cost of implementing body cameras for a 5-year period. We are working to have these cost projections available in the coming weeks.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- The community needs to consider the following questions when assessing whether or not Bethlehem's police officers should be outfitted with body cameras.
 - Are the issues of concern – particularly Use of Force incidents, community complaints, and internal reports of misconduct – occurring at a frequency and level of severity that cannot be addressed without body cameras?
 - Should the funds required for implementing body cameras be taken from existing programs within the Police Dept or from other Town government programs or services, or should taxes be raised to cover the cost?
 - Are body cameras the highest fiscal priority for the Police Dept and the Town, or are there other priorities to which these funds would be better directed?

WHAT TRAINING DO OUR POLICE OFFICERS RECEIVE?

Bethlehem police officers receive ongoing training after joining the department to refine and expand their skills, and to ensure that they maintain proficiency in key skills. Fundamentally, Bethlehem police officers train continually throughout their careers to ensure they are able to do their jobs safely and well.

In order to meet State accreditation standards, officers must have a minimum of 21 hours of training each year. Officers currently are regularly trained in the proper use of firearms, Use of Force, changes in laws, CPR and Narcan administration, and the like. Some training sessions end with mandatory tests to help ensure fundamental concepts are understood. Some officers also take specialized training in topics such as fire investigation and crash reconstruction.

Training sessions and courses are provided by the Zone 5 Regional Law Enforcement Training Academy, various State and Federal services, and professional organizations. There are also

monthly training sessions organized and led by Bethlehem Police Dept staff. Most training courses are conducted online or in classroom settings, though some trainings are reality-based. Some Bethlehem police officers are instructors at the Training Academy.

All supervisors are additionally required to complete a 3-week training course within a year of being promoted. Courses include liability, supervisory principles, and incident command. The purpose is to give new supervisors a solid training foundation to build upon.

Trauma-Informed Policing

The experiences that each community member has had in their personal and professional lives, in addition to what they've seen in the media and entertainment venues, likely have greater effects on their perceptions of our Police Dept than actual interactions with our officers. As such, community members may view our police officers with fear and distrust regardless of the actions of our police officers as individuals or a together as a department. This may not be fair – no one wants to be grouped in with people who do terrible things – but it is real and it needs to be treated seriously.

It is vital for our officers to be trained to recognize the roots of trauma when interacting with community members. For some, the distrust may manifest as unease because of something that they recently saw in the news. For others, the mere presence of an officer can be a connection to past personal trauma and cause extreme anxiety that makes any interactions more difficult for both the community member and the officer.

De-escalation Training

De-escalation training has been an element of our police training for several years, but it was increased and incorporated into other trainings in early 2020. While firearms safety is reviewed twice each year (proficiency with firearms is required by Police Dept policy and State accreditation mandates), tactics for not having to resort to firearms is a core element of each session. Officers also take non-lethal force training, again with tactics for not having to resort to force as a core component of the training.

Beyond formal training, sergeants regularly review incidents with officers to help them learn and become better at their jobs. As demonstrated by the extremely low number of Use of Force incidents, and by the rarity of injuries occurring when Use of Force is required, communicating and connecting are core skills for Bethlehem police officers during volatile incidents.

Training for Mental Health Emergencies & Substance Use/Abuse Incidents

The department's emphasis on communicating and connecting are particularly important in cases involving mental health emergencies. As a small town, our police officers have frequently had past interactions with community members experiencing mental health challenges, and as such often know involved community members by name and are known to them. This allows our officers to verbally connect more quickly with the community member when they are in distress, and to help them get the support services they need safely, respectfully, and without arrests being made.

Officers are further trained, both in formal sessions and on-the-job, to recognize and respond appropriately when interacting with individuals who may be impaired as a result of substance use/abuse. Typically, these interactions involve stabilizing the individuals to make sure they are safe, and to connect the community members with other agencies that can get them the help they need. In medical emergencies involving overdoses, Bethlehem police officers are trained in Narcan administration and to stabilize patients until emergency medical services arrive (though some officers are also trained as Emergency Medical Technicians).

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Integrate the concepts of procedural justice into all training programs.
- Expand the training curriculum to include training in practices around implicit bias and trauma-informed policing, ideally including Crisis Intervention training that involves in-person interactions with professional educators and volunteers willing to share their experiences.
- Work with training providers to integrate de-escalation, effective verbal and non-verbal communication, social interaction skills, ethics, and professionalism into all training curricula. Also, integrate the core elements of these into the regular routine of officers to further cement them as core cultural values of the Police Dept.
- Build out a regular training schedule for officers to help establish continued learning of new and emerging best practices as a fundamental part of the Police Dept's culture.

HOW CAN THE POLICE DEPT BETTER CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY?

Fostering trust and legitimacy are fundamental tenets of the Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative. Relationships between communities and agencies are, like all relationships, fundamentally about relationships between people. Ultimately, it often all comes down to personal connections.

As our community in Bethlehem has grown to more than 35,000 residents and many, many visitors each day, and as the number of sworn police officers has remained steadily between 35 and 40 for the last decade, it has become increasingly difficult for our officers to establish personal relationships with everyone. The result is that interactions are often rooted in assumptions – assumptions by officers about community members, and assumptions by community members about officers.

While few community members shared personal experiences about police interactions through the Collaborative process, there was a general sense that some were happy with the Police Dept while others viewed it with unease, distrust, and even fear. Concerns in the latter group noted fear of allowing children of color to walk through neighborhoods wearing hoodies or to play in their front yards with toy guns, and fear about children of color getting licenses and driving through town. Several community members related how they as teenagers of color were treated differently from their white peers. In one case, for example, a Black teen was told by an officer that he did not live in an affluent neighborhood even though the teen was standing in front of his house in that neighborhood. The officer did not make similar assertions about the teen's white friends who were with him.

It is the obligation of our Police Dept to not only ensure that all community members *are* safe, but also to work with the community to make sure all members *feel* safe. Chief Cocchiara came into her new role with an ambitious vision for increasing connections between police officers and the community members they serve by continuing events that have been underway for years, and by instituting new programs and activities. To this end, in 2020 the Police Dept:

- created a new Facebook page with information about Police Dept activities;
- continued having patrol officers stop and give children ice-cream coupons when the kids were wearing bike helmets; and

- organized a Holiday Parade-Special Edition when the traditional Town holiday parade had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.

Prior to the pandemic, the Police Dept also partnered with Cumberland Farms to have Coffee with a Cop events, held National Night Out with local fire departments and emergency services, organized bicycle safety events and car-seat fittings, and more.

The purpose of these events, in addition to officers chatting with residents in local shops and in neighborhoods, has been to give community members an opportunity to interact with officers in settings that do not involve a traffic stop or an emergency call. Through these interactions, the hope is to establish real and authentic relationships. But given sentiments expressed in demonstrations and through the Collaborative process, more needs to be done.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums. Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Establish regular patrols with officers on bicycles, as they can not only more easily patrol busy off-road areas like the rail trail, they can more easily stop to chat with community members.
- Improve opportunities for community feedback so officers can hear the perspectives of individuals who have had contact with officers and thereby help the Police Dept continue tuning procedures for engaging people who may be in crisis.
- How can police officers connect with parents and children of color to build understanding, connect as individuals, alleviate fear, and develop trust?
- How can police officers connect with community members who do not live in Bethlehem, but who come here to shop or work?

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT OUR POLICE OFFICERS' WELLBEING?

Working as a police officer is a demanding, high stress job. Our officers work in extremely tense situations, and are expected to endure verbal abuse and disrespectful behavior (such as being spit on) without ever losing their calm and professional demeanor. They also see heartbreaking situations first hand, such as families killed in car crashes, victims of child pornography and sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicides, and more.

It is important that we consider the wellbeing of our police officers just as we consider the wellbeing of our community members who interact with them. Currently, police supervisors are trained through the New York State Police Academy to identify early warning signs of mental health problems and potentially suicidal behavior in their teams, and to route officers in crisis to support services.

The Police Dept provides internal peer counseling to help prepare officers for the stress of their job, and officers can draw on the services of the State Employee Assistance Program for additional mental health and training support programs. On a case by case basis, officers may also participate in critical incident stress debriefings with other emergency responders after particularly disturbing or difficult calls.

Reform & Reinvention Opportunities

These are prompts, not fleshed out ideas or pre-determined ultimatums.
Going forward, we will need to identify solutions that are clearly connected to resolving issues identified through the Collaborative effort.

- Create a more formal peer support team and officer wellness program within the Police Dept.
- Utilize local behavioral health experts and services as needed to support officers.
- Consider using smartphone apps, such as Smart Assessment on your Mobile, to help officers identify times when they might benefit from support services.
- Review department policies and procedures around not only the provision of mental health support services for officers exposed to trauma on the job, but also processes that reinforce the expectation that officers will utilize them.
- Create a police therapy dog program to both assist with community engagement and support officers and dispatchers in the police station.

CONCLUSION (*will be added to Second Draft*)

Appendix @ - TOWN OF BETHLEHEM RESOLUTION SUPPORTING BLACK LIVES

WHEREAS, the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Philando Castile, Stephon Clark, George Floyd, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Botham Jean, Atatiana Jefferson, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Breonna Taylor, and countless others have drawn attention to structural and systemic racism in our country;

WHEREAS, "structural racism" is not just an expression of racial animus; rather, it is a set of consequences within society that lead to racially unequal outcomes in people's lives via the ordinary daily workings of society, caused by the accumulated history of racist oppression from slavery through Jim Crow, as well as past and continuing discrimination;

WHEREAS, Black people, immigrants and people of color have been, on countless occasions, historically marginalized, disproportionately criminalized, and targeted by excessive force and brutality by an unjust system;

WHEREAS, the Black Lives Matter movement and the COVID-19 pandemic have illuminated the current crisis, along with the socio-economic and environmental inequalities that have negatively impacted communities of color, specifically related to the lack of access to opportunities in education, housing, employment, healthcare, and every aspect of American life;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bethlehem commits to the affirmation that Black lives matter because so many Black lives and people of color have for so long been discounted, undervalued, abused, and taken from us;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bethlehem appreciates the dedicated women and men of our Police Department who work to keep our community safe. At the same time, the tremendous power of our Police Officers must be balanced with the tremendous responsibility they have. We will recommit to a shared understanding of how we treat our residents as well as visitors to our community, and this soul-searching work will be a part of our forthcoming Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative and a priority of our Police Chief, Police Department and Town Council;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bethlehem acknowledges that we must do our part to dismantle all injustices within our community and we must not let silence render us complicit with these injustices;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bethlehem believes in individual liberties, civil rights, human rights, and voting rights;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Bethlehem will advocate against racism in our community and will work actively with residents and town leaders, our town institutions, and our law enforcement and justice system to ensure that all Black, Brown and Indigenous people and all people of color have equal protection under the law;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Bethlehem, through its Town Council, affirms that Black lives matter, commits to being anti-racist, and strives to be a place where people of all races are welcome and can move freely without fear or intimidation; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Town of Bethlehem will continue to seek solutions that foster *a better future for all*, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation so that we may truly become a society and a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

On a motion by Councilwoman Cunningham, seconded by Councilwoman Becker and approved on September 9, 2020 with the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor VanLuven, Councilwoman Becker, Councilman Coffey, Councilwoman Cunningham

NOES: Councilman Foster

ABSENT: none

APPENDIX \$ - POLICE REFORM & REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As part of the Bethlehem Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative, the Town formed an Advisory Committee to help ensure the Collaborative successfully improved trust, fairness, equity, and justice within our community and our Police Dept, and addressed any racial bias, discrimination, and disproportionate policing of communities of color. The core mission of the committee was to advise on how to most effectively engage the community and incorporate community input into the Collaborative process. The committee's membership represented a broad range of views and perspectives about our town and our Police Dept, including members with particular insights into experiences that people of color have had with the Police Dept, and who could offer recommendations on how to improve these interactions.

CONSULTANT

Jasmin Brandow



Jasmin S. Brandow is a facilitator committed to empowering people through intentional conversations about identity, awareness, and impact. She has a B.A. in Sociology from University at Albany, SUNY, and an M.A. in Political Science from Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs. During graduate school, Jasmin completed a fellowship with the Center for Women Government and Civil Society and wrote a policy on respect and interpersonal behavior for NYS Office of Mental Health. From 2007-2012, she worked with the NYS Office of

Court Administration, including Offices of Workforce Diversity, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Court Improvement Programs, where her efforts were focused on policies and projects related to preventing workplace violence, increasing access to justice, and addressing disparities in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In 2015, Jasmin co-founded HumanKind Workshop to develop and share learning experiences that bring people together around topics like culture, bias, humility, and healing. She is also co-founder of Sol & Luna LLC, a small business designing yoga products to support mindfulness practices for children and families.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Jennifer Ansong

My name is Jennifer and I live in Glenmont, NY. I have lived in Bethlehem my entire life. I am currently a fourth year undergraduate at the University of Buffalo where I am studying biology and music. I also work at my university's Intercultural and Diversity Center where I plan programs and advocate for underrepresented students on campus. I chose to serve on the Advisory Committee because I believe the Committee has the power to mend the racial divide in the community around the police, K-12 education, and other institutions. I want to be a part of that change so that Bethlehem can be a more welcoming

community to future generations of people of color. I look forward to the work the Committee will do because I think Bethlehem is full of people who want to address its problems and solve them. I love this town and I always want it to be better.

Darnell Douglas

Darnell Douglas is a longtime Bethlehem resident and alum of Bethlehem Central High School. He and his wife have three children, two of which still attend Bethlehem Central Schools. He received his undergrad at Manhattan College and was a track athlete throughout his college career. He decided to bring his passion for track and field back to BCCHS in 2007 and became a coach for the track and field team, which he proudly coaches to this day. Darnell received his Master's in School Counseling from Russel Sage College in 2013 and joined the BCCHS Counseling Department in 2015. He has an immense passion for all things track and standup comedy so if you know any good knock-knock jokes, pass them on. He enjoys staying active and taking adventures to new places with his family. Darnell is excited to be a part of this committee and is looking forward to contributing to a better future for our community.

Xavier R. Fitzsimmons Cruz

My name is Xavier and I live in Delmar. I joined this panel as an advocate for youth civic engagement and police reform. In an effort to add people from diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds I am well suited for this position. I am confident my experiences as a life-long resident of Bethlehem for twenty years, co-founder of Bethlehem For Social Justice, BOCES Educator, and youth activist will add to the work of this committee.

Jaye Holly



Understanding that it is from our differences that we draw our strength, Jaye Holly has been a lifelong advocate and activist for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). She works for the Sanctuary Institute, serving as a trainer and consultant to human-service organizations that are working to build trauma-informed cultures. Her job takes her all across the country, working with agencies large and small, as they create environments that support healing and resilience for their communities.

Additionally, she operates Jaye Holly Consulting, working with organizations on identifying and addressing their EDI challenges, as well as other training needs.

Jaye attended Marist College in Poughkeepsie for her Bachelor's Degree in psychology. She received her Master's in Human Resources Development from McDaniel College (then Western Maryland College). Recently, she completed a certificate program from Cornell University in Diversity & Inclusion.

As a child growing up in the Midwest, Jaye watched her parents navigate the racial challenges of the 1960s by working to empower themselves and others. She learned that activism was the antidote to hopelessness. She carries that spirit with her today, through her professional life as well as her volunteerism. Throughout her life, Jaye has served on many boards of directors for non-profits, including In Our Own Voices here in Albany. She is quite active with her church, the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, where she has served on the Social Responsibilities Council as well as on the Inclusion Team. She is also a member of Bethlehem Indivisible.

Although Jaye is not a native of Bethlehem, she and her wife Judy have been delighted to call Delmar their home since 2008. They are the proud parents of a very energetic beagle-mix named Oscar. If Jaye had any spare time, she would like to use it for reading, baking, playing Scrabble and doing Zumba.

Zhiying Li



I am very excited and honored to have the opportunity to contribute to a positive change in our community. I am Chinese. I came to the US for graduate study in the field of life sciences more than twenty years ago and stayed since. My family and I moved to the capital region three years ago due to job relocation. We chose to live in Delmar for one of the most common reasons: the school district. Our two kids are at Eagle Elementary.

The pandemic gave me a chance to be a lot more informed about things happening around me locally, nationally and internationally. As a result, I found myself becoming more and more interested in being involved in activities that my neighbors and friends (who I got to know in the past three years) are involved in. As a minority member of the community, I am very much interested in contributing positively in community affairs that matter to every member of the community, on behalf of all Chinese residents who I may or may not have gotten the opportunity to know in person. I believe this reform and reinvention task is one of such important issues.

As advised by the Governor and stated by our town board, the Police Reform and Reinvention Advisory Committee aims to foster collaborative work relationship and community involvement. Building collaborative work relationship is a key element in ensuring progress. Engaging community openly and positively is the first step in achieving the trust needed to pave the road for reaching fairness, equity and justice built upon mutual understanding and respect.

As a scientist, I would like to contribute positively on data analysis and related issues such as data collection, trouble-shooting and others, if assistance as such is needed. As a member of a minority group, I would like to share information and comments from Chinese immigrants' perspective, to increase the diversity of the committee. As a mature and healthy adult, I would do my best to contribute people power to support the committee's decisions and actions, whenever needed.

As the whole nation reflects on the passing of RBG, one particular comment from the NYTimes caught my attention, "Judge Ginsburg's ... role" when serving on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit "sprang from deep convictions that in a healthy democracy, the judicial branch should work in partnership with the other branches, rather than seek to impose a last word that left no room for further discussion." I believe forming the advisory committee and working toward building a collaborative relationship to serve the bigger and better good of the community is one of such actions a healthy democracy could take. I applaud the town board's action in this regard and look forward to moving forward with all the other committee members in assisting our town and our police in achieving the goal of reform and reinvention.

Donald Robbins



Don Robbins is a 30-year resident of Bethlehem (Slingerlands). Don recently retired from a 40-year professional career which included senior staff positions with the New York State Assembly and senior executive positions in two State agencies: the NYS Division of Substance Abuse Services and the NYS Department of Social Services. Don also spent 13 years in the private sector as Director of Operations for WellCare of New York a regional managed health care company, Government Analyst for the Law Firm Hinman Straub and, Vice President for Regional Government Affairs at Magellan Health a national health care provider.

Don and his wife Pamela Clark Robbins are the parents of two sons Matthew and Tyler both of whom attended Bethlehem schools, and the grandparents of four- one of whom attends

Slingerlands Elementary School. Pam is the President of Policy Research Associates a Delmar based firm which employs 60 persons.

Don's volunteer activities have included Coaching for Bethlehem Pop Warner and the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Basketball Club (BBC). Currently Don serves on the Boards of: The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, St. Catherine's Center for Children, and Community Caregivers.

Statement on Police Reform and Reinvention Advisory Committee

As a 30-year resident of Bethlehem (Slingerlands), I have seen many changes in the Town impacting demographics, governance, commerce and development. All of these changes result in a Community which looks and feels different now than it did 30-years ago. There are new faces, new opinions, more businesses and more visitors. As an African American male my view of the Town has an added lens. There are more Black, Brown and Asian faces around. There are fewer residents who have spent their lifetimes in the Town and more who have come from other places, near and far. There is an increased diversity of people, experiences and opinions.

One thing that unifies us all however is the desire to feel welcomed, safe and fairly and equitably treated by and in the Town. The Police Reform and Reinvention Advisory Committee will play a critical role in ensuring that the work of the Bethlehem Police Department (BPD) reflects the best practices and highest standards of Community service; that the BPD will treat all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, residents and visitors, with respect, fairness and professionalism. Additionally, the Advisory Committee will help to reimagine the role of the BPD, to again ensure that the service provided reflects best practices, uses resources efficiently and engenders trust within all the Community. I have an extensive background in policy development and implementation. I have drafted and negotiated legislation and budgets and I have also been responsible for the implementation of those policies. I believe I can bring that experience to the work of the Advisory Committee and do the hard work to ensure that the BPD operates in a way that we can all have confidence and pride in.

Monica Scherzer

Monica moved to Bethlehem in 2003, and she resides in the hamlet of Delmar with her husband, Jonathan, and her two sons. An educator since 1998, Monica has worked in various areas that differ in demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds. This experience has allowed her to witness the differences in how police officers interact with a variety of communities. Monica's goal for working on the Police Reform Advisory Committee is to improved trust and to strengthen relationships between the police and people of color as Bethlehem's diversity continues to grow.

Suni Swann



Suni Swann, a town resident (Selkirk) since 1992, grew up in a multi-ethnicity, lower-income family. This background, along with her bi-racial marriage and faith allowed for Suni to experience diversity and inclusion challenges. These challenges taught her perseverance, ingenuity, and self-control. Her post-secondary education centered on education and psychology (with a focus on law enforcement). Her interest in law enforcement reform stems from her studies and life experiences. Her understanding that change is positive when proactive in approach is key to police reform. Suni has spent the majority of her time volunteering within the Capital Region mentoring others. She has served on numerous committees within her school district where she now substitutes as a teacher, when needed.

Caren Tiu



I have lived in the Town of Bethlehem for more than 13 years alongside my husband, Ronan and our 2 children. I am looking forward to being a part of the Police Reform and Reinvention Advisory Committee to help facilitate trust and respect between the police department and all of the members of this community. I am Puerto Rican, Bronx raised, married to a Filipino with two wonderful mixed race children. This diversity in my own family guides me to be a part of this conversation.

Katie Yezzi



Katie Yezzi grew up in the Capital Region. Having moved away for college and career for 18 years, she returned to the area in 2006, purchasing a home in Delmar, where she currently lives with her spouse and two children who attend the Bethlehem Public Schools.

Professionally, Ms. Yezzi has spent the majority of her 27-year career committed to social justice through education by serving predominantly Black and Latinx communities. Most recently, she was a school founder and an Assistant Superintendent in Troy, providing previously underserved

students from the Capital Region a high quality, college preparatory education.

She views her role on the committee as an opportunity to give back to our community, to seek fair and equitable policing for all people who live, work, and travel through Bethlehem, and to leverage this moment as a way to bring our community closer together through democratic participation. She is eager to analyze data and solicit the input of a broad range of stakeholders in order to ensure our police meet the needs of Bethlehem.

FAITH BASED COMMUNITY GROUP

Rev. Dr. Roxanne Jones Booth, Riverview Missionary Baptist Church



Rev. Dr. Roxanne Jones Booth is Co-Pastor of the Riverview Missionary Baptist Church in Coeymans Landing. In addition to Co-Pastoring, she is an Adjunct Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Africana Studies at SUNY Albany. She is also a Recovery Coach at Homer Perkins Center in Albany, NY, which is a re-integration facility for men in recovery from alcohol and substance abuse. Dr. Booth enjoys traveling. She and her husband most recently traveled to Japan to celebrate their 20th Wedding Anniversary. She has served for 10

years as a Christian mission worker living in Eswatini and South Africa. Currently, she coordinates an annual short-term mission trip to Southern Africa sponsored by the Riverview Missionary Baptist Church. She is a life-time member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and serves as the Chair of the International Awareness and Involvement Committee for the Albany (NY) Alumnae Chapter. She and her husband, the Reverend Antonio Booth have been residents of Selkirk for over 10 years.

Dr. Booth wanted to participate on the Advisory Committee because of her shared experience with men, women, boys and girls of African descent who live each day in a nation that is still trying to be a “a more perfect union.” She brings the perspective of having grown up in this community with family and friends who have experienced micro-aggressions and discrimination

all their lives. Dr. Booth will use her academic expertise in African American history as well as her lived experiences in making our community better for everybody.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Gina Cocchiara, Chief of Police



Gina F. Cocchiara is the Chief of Police of the Bethlehem Police Department. She is a twenty-six year veteran of law enforcement with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration and has held the positions of Patrol Officer, Patrol Sergeant and Detective Sergeant before being appointed to the position of Chief in 2020.

Chief Cocchiara believes in developing strong community relationships and bonds, both professionally and personally. She is a strong proponent of the community policing philosophy, police professionalism and continuing education and training. She is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, and

New York Women in Law Enforcement Organization and sits on the board of directors for the Bethlehem Youth Court.

The Chief resides in Glenmont, New York.

COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Mary Tanner-Richter, Asst District Attorney



Mary Tanner-Richter has been an Assistant District Attorney in the Office of the Albany County District Attorney since February 2001, and is currently the Chief of the Vehicular Crimes Unit and a designated Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor for the State of New York. She has specialized in the area of vehicular crimes prosecution since 2004 and was instrumental in creating the Albany County District Attorney's Vehicular Crimes Unit in 2008. Ms. Tanner-Richter has completed training in At Scene Motor Vehicle Collision Investigation, and is responsible for overseeing the prosecution of all felony alcohol/drug-related vehicular crimes, vehicular assaults and vehicular homicides in Albany County. She has participated in numerous trainings of

various law enforcement officials and prosecutors across the State and has spoken on numerous occasions to high school parents and students, and college students. Additionally, Ms. Tanner-Richter has been involved in providing training to Bar and Tavern Owners throughout the Capital Region. Ms. Tanner-Richter is a member of the Albany District Attorney's Office DWI Advisory Board, the Albany County STOP-DWI Program, and currently sits on the NYS GTSC Taskforce on Impaired Driving Enforcement Team. In addition, Mary is a member of the Appellate Division 3rd Department Character and Fitness Committee.

Ms. Tanner-Richter received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Nazareth College in Rochester, New York, in 1994, and received her JD from Albany Law School in 1998. Prior to coming to the Albany County District Attorney's Office, Ms. Tanner-Richter was an Associate at the Buffalo Law Firm of Jaekle, Fleischmann, & Mugel, LLP., assigned to the Litigation Department, from 1998-2000.

Ms. Tanner-Richter is the recipient of the 2011 Recognition of Excellence Award presented by NYS STOP DWI, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, in conjunction with the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee. Additionally, Albany County STOP DWI presented Mary

with the Daniel S. Dwyer Memorial Award in December 2012 to honor her commitment to justice for victims of DWI crimes. In 2015, Mary Tanner-Richter was named the National Traffic Safety Prosecutor of the Year by the National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators (NAPC).

In 2018, Bureau Chief Tanner-Richter was named as one of two Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors (TSRP) for the State of New York through the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee’s Highway Safety Program. The program is grant funded by the Federal Highway Safety Program under the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and addresses roadway safety through education and trainings across the State of New York, as well as nationwide. As a TSRP, Ms. Tanner-Richter is working in conjunction with members of the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the National Traffic Law Center of the American Prosecutors Research Institute to keep New York prosecutors and police officers apprised of the latest traffic safety issues affecting the entire country.

COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER’S OFFICE

Gabriella Romero, Asst Public Defender



Gabriella Romero is an Assistant Public Defender with the Albany County Public Defender’s Office where she serves as a Felony Trial Attorney as well as the Primary Public Defender assigned to Bethlehem Town Court. Prior to her assignment to Bethlehem, Ms. Romero served as the Assistant Public Defender assigned to Colonie Town Court, Guilderland Town Court, and Menands Village Court where she zealously represented hundreds of clients.

Ms. Romero graduated from Albany Law School in 2018, where she was a Pro Bono Scholar, Editor in Chief of the Government Law Review, Executive Vice President of the Student Bar Association, in addition to the President of her 1L Class. In law school she was a Puerto Rican Bar Association Diamond Jubilee Scholar, as well as a recipient of the J.H. Milstein award for Excellence in Clinical Programs for her leadership, professionalism, and advocacy during her internship at the Schenectady County Public Defender’s Office.

Prior to law school, Ms. Romero was awarded the Minerva Fellowship for the 2014-2015 session where she focused on social issues and political unrest in Estero de Platano, Ecuador. Gabriella completed her B.S. at Union College in 2014. She is excited to not only listen, but to add her voice to this discussion on issues of race, community, and ethics within Bethlehem.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

David VanLuven, Town Supervisor



David VanLuven joined the Town Board in January 2016 and was elected as Town Supervisor in November of 2017. He previously served on the Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Assessment Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation. Professionally, David led a variety of programs with nonprofits and state agencies for 20 years, including directing the NY Natural Heritage Program in the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and launching The Nature Conservancy’s Hudson River Estuary Program. In these roles, he built strong teams, navigated shifting politics, managed complex budgets, and raised millions through grants and appropriations. More recently, David worked as a strategic planning consultant for nonprofit organizations and government agencies

throughout the Northeast. David and his wife Isabelle Bleecker moved to Delmar in 2001, and have three daughters Catie, Juliette, and Emma in the Bethlehem Central School District. David has a B.A. from Middlebury College with a double major in Religion and Arctic/Alpine Ecology (for which he did his thesis research 130 miles north of the Arctic Circle), and a joint M.S. from Tufts University in Urban/Environmental Policy and Biology.

Joyce Becker, Town Councilmember



As an experienced Town Department head, Joyce dedicated her working life to improve the lives of families and older adults. Retired from municipal service, Joyce is a recognized leader who wants to represent the community with integrity and compassion on the Town Board.

Dan Coffey, Town Councilmember



Dan Coffey joined the Town Board in January 2019. He previously served on the Town’s Planning Board (2009) and as Chair of the Town’s Zoning Board of Appeals (2010-2017). He also served on the Town’s Comprehensive Plan Assessment Committee (2013). Dan is an attorney and partner of the Albany law firm Bowitch & Coffey, LLC, practicing in the areas of environmental/land use and insurance-related litigation. He volunteers as an attorney mentor in Bethlehem Youth Court, serves as an assistant-volunteer at the Albany County Family Court, and is a member of the Third Judicial District’s Committee on Character and Fitness. In 2016, Dan was President of the Albany County Bar Association. Dan is a graduate of Union College of Schenectady (BA, political science), Columbia University (Master of Public Administration) and Georgetown University Law Center (juris doctor). He previously worked for the U.S. Congressional Budget Office and General Accounting Office in Washington before relocating to the Capital Region. Dan, his wife Eileen, and their two daughters live in central Delmar. In his spare time, Dan can be seen running or biking on the streets of Bethlehem.

Maureen Cunningham, Town Councilmember



Maureen Cunningham joined the Bethlehem Town Board in 2018. She previously served on the town’s Conservation Easement Review Board, Local Waterfront Revitalization Advisory Group, Open Space Working Group, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. A native of Upstate New York and a town resident since 2008, Maureen lives with her husband, Paul, and two sons in Delmar. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Hudson River Watershed Alliance, a nonprofit organization working to ensure clean and abundant water supplies by empowering community groups and local municipalities throughout the region. Prior to this work in the Hudson Valley, Maureen had an extensive international background working on biodiversity conservation, ecotourism and community development issues, and speaks Spanish and French. Maureen served on the Friends of Five Rivers Board of Directors and has led several PTA

initiatives at Hamagrael Elementary School, including launching their popular Walk to School and Bike to School events. A graduate of Yale University and The American University, Maureen earned her master’s degree in Environmental Management and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies.

Jim Foster, Town Councilmember



Jim Foster was elected and took office on the Town Board in January 2018. A third-generation resident of Bethlehem, Jim has volunteered hundreds of hours serving the community in various capacities, including as a long-time member of the Elsmere Fire Company. After graduating from Bethlehem Central High School, Jim attended Georgetown University from which he graduated with honors with a dual major in Government and Psychology. While in college Jim earned his EMT certification and received hands-on medical training working in the Georgetown University Hospital Emergency Room. He

continued on to employment as a Senior Auditor at UHY Advisors, where he was granted Top Secret security clearance and provided consulting services to various federal agencies, including the Department of Defense, at multiple civilian and military installations, including the US Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2007, Jim left UHY Advisors to attend Albany Law School, where he served on the Executive Board of the Albany Law Review and graduated with honors. He then accepted a position as a litigator in the Manhattan office of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy, LLP, a top international law firm. As a litigator, Jim worked on highly-complex commercial cases and managed a team of over 60 attorneys. While in Manhattan, Jim also worked pro bono on environmental policy at the Environmental Defense Fund. Jim received further executive legal and business training at Harvard University and was recognized by Legal Services NYC for his dedication to providing legal representation to the poor and underserved. In 2016, Jim joined a local law firm as an attorney in that firm’s Corporate and Transactional group. He sits on the Advisory Council of the Bethlehem YMCA and on the Board of Directors of the Elsmere Fire Company, where he also continues to serve as an active firefighter and “big brother” to several junior firefighters. Jim currently resides at his home in Delmar in the neighborhood immediately behind Elsmere School.

APPENDIX A - DATA ON INCIDENT TYPES

The tables below show incident data from Police Dept Annual Reports from 2015-2019, with the 163 different incident types used in the past cross-walked into the 52 compressed incident types that will be tracked by the Police Dept starting in 2021. These incident data can be used to get a general picture of the types of incidents that occur in Bethlehem and their general frequency relative to one another, but they are not of sufficient quality to enable detailed analyses, even across years. This is because the data were never used by the State, Police Dept, or public, so they were not rigorously managed for consistency.

New Incident Type (infrequent sworn officer/public interaction)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Administration	310	1,467	278	265	191
Animal Control	1,384	1,389	1,417	1,293	1,230
Other	2,407	2,275	2,244	1,951	2,728
Property Check	303	3	369	333	341
Public Works Notification	457	231	307	308	256
Records	812	113	755	935	1,207
Test	47	57	78	42	30
Traffic Detail	181	70	25	46	338
Traffic Hazard	619	578	584	647	653
Train Incident	6	14	16	11	4
Subtotal (infrequent public interaction)	6,526	6,197	6,073	5,831	6,978

New Incident Type (frequent sworn officer/public interaction)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Alarm-Bank	40	32	12	30	16
Alarm-Burglary	1,120	1,092	1,114	1,051	1,102
Assault	21	23	16	26	22
Assist-Other Agency	308	4,238	401	317	273
Assist-Person	1,187	1,182	1,253	819	862
Bomb Threat	1	1		2	
Burglary	51	3	36	25	24
Check a Person	865	746	954	846	976
Check a Vehicle	1,543	1,439	1,475	1,223	1,408
Community Program	490	465	430	564	401
Court	85	2	83	77	76
Crash-Personal Injury	140	147	234	169	133
Crash-Property Damage	958	902	851	962	894
Crash-Unknown	104	68	96	99	89
Criminal Mischief	135	79	121	79	89
Dispute-Civil	122	396	169	176	171
Domestic-Physical	146	135	154	146	147
Domestic-Verbal	219	265	254	243	245
Drugs	42	38	490	534	200
Emotionally Disturbed Person	67	59	102	72	116
EMS Call	2,818	44	3,078	3,280	3,054

New Incident Type (frequent sworn officer/public interaction)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Fight	32	2	23	3	54
Fire Call	813	100	796	793	699
Fireworks	29	126	45	30	48
Get Report	387	1,232	313	326	327
Investigation/Follow Up	1,289	267	1,030	931	1,029
Juvenile Incident	115	139	82	44	68
Larceny	475	163	488	517	423
Missing Person	59	543	54	39	61
Open Door/Window	56	2	43	61	83
Person Suicidal	21	10	9	13	13
Person with a Weapon	5	35	9	3	1
Police Information	1,053	9	1,141	1,004	1,067
Property	564	616	307	304	394
Prowler	17	213	8	16	12
Robbery	2	165	3	3	1
Sex Crimes	100	4	84	87	116
Shots Fired	35	42	52	45	33
Town Offense	36	225	275	306	18
Traffic Stop	363	14	323	294	300
Vehicle in Violation	88	35	68	58	80
Vehicle Lockout	306	254	265	237	212
Warrants	276	277	333	285	261
Subtotal (frequent public interaction)	16,583	15,829	17,074	16,139	15,598
INCIDENT TOTALS	23,109	22,026	23,147	21,970	22,576

APPENDIX # - DATA ON PERCEIVED RACE OF ALLEGED VIOLATORS ISSUED TICKETS 2015-2019

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Other	Not Reported
2015	1,530	458	65	52	0	51	181
2016	2,096	443	104	72	0	49	0
2017	2,749	494	128	127	1	53	124
2018	2,695	580	137	129	0	95	363
2019	2,571	609	188	128	0	106	426
5-year average	2,328	517	124	102	0	71	219
5-year average	69%	15%	4%	3%	0%	2%	7%

APPENDIX * - POLICE DEPT RULES OF CONDUCT (LAST UPDATED IN 2002)

**ARTICLE XI
RULES OF CONDUCT
Last Updated in 2002**

11.1 Violation of Rules

Officers shall not commit any acts or omit any which constitute a violation of the rules, regulations, directives or orders of the Department, whether stated in this General Order or elsewhere.

11.2 Unbecoming Conduct

Officers shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as to reflect most favorably on the Department. Conduct unbecoming an officer shall include that which brings the Department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the officer as a member of the Department, or that which impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or officer.

11.3 Immoral Conduct

Officers shall maintain a level of moral conduct in their personal and business affairs which is in keeping with the highest standards of law enforcement profession. Officers shall not participate in any incident involving moral turpitude which impairs their ability to perform as law enforcement officers or causes the Department to be brought into disrepute.

11.4 Conformance to Laws

A. Officers shall obey all laws of the United States and of any state and local jurisdiction in which the officers are present.

B. A conviction of the violation of any law shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

11.5 Reporting for Duty

Officers shall report for duty at the time and place required by assignment or orders and shall be physically and mentally fit to perform their duties. They shall be properly equipped and cognizant of information required for the proper performance of duty so that they may immediately assume their duties. Judicial subpoenas or directives shall constitute an order to report for duty under this Section.

11.6 Neglect of Duty

Officers shall not read, play games, watch television or movies or otherwise engage in entertainment while on duty, except as may be required in the performance of duty. They shall not engage in any activities or personal business which would cause them to neglect or be inattentive to duty.

11.7 Fictitious Illness or Injury Reports

Officers shall not feign illness or injury, falsely report themselves ill or injured, or otherwise deceive or attempt to deceive any official of the Department as to the condition of their health.

11.8 Sleeping on Duty

Officers shall remain awake while on duty. If unable to do so, they shall so report to their superior officer, who shall determine the proper course of action.

11.9 Leaving Duty Post

Officers shall not leave their duty assignment during a tour of duty except when authorized by proper authority.

11.10 Meals

Officers shall be permitted to suspend patrol or other assigned activity, subject to immediate call at all times, for the purpose of having meals during their tours of duty, but only for such period of time, and at such time and place, as established by departmental procedures.

11.11 Unsatisfactory Performance

Officers shall maintain sufficient competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their positions. Officers shall perform their duties in a manner which will maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objectives of the Department. Unsatisfactory performance may be demonstrated by a lack of knowledge of the application of laws required to be enforced; an unwillingness or inability to perform assigned tasks; the failure to conform to work standards established for the officers rank, grade, or position; the failure to take appropriate action on the occasion of a crime, disorder, or other condition deserving police attention; or absence without leave. In addition to other indicia of unsatisfactory performance: repeated poor evaluations or a written record of repeated infractions of rules, regulations, directives or orders of the Department.

11.12 Employment Outside of Department

A. Officers may engage in off-duty employment subject to the following limitations: (1) such employment shall not interfere with the officers' employment with the Department: (2) officers shall submit a written request for off-duty employment to the appropriate Division Commander whose approval must be granted prior to engaging in such employment.

B. Approval may be denied where it appears that the outside employment might:

- (1) render the offices unavailable during an emergency,
- (2) physically or mentally exhaust the officers to the point that their performance may be affected,
- (3) require that any special consideration be given to scheduling of the officers' regular duty hours, or
- 4) bring the Department into disrepute or impair the operation or efficiency of the Department or officer.

11.13 Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs in Police Installations

Officers shall not store or bring into any police facility or vehicle alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, narcotics or hallucinogens except alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, narcotics or hallucinogens which are held as evidence.

11.14 Possession and Use of Drugs

Officers shall not possess or use any controlled substance, narcotics, or hallucinogens except when prescribed in the treatment of officers by a physician or dentist. When controlled substances, narcotics, or hallucinogens are prescribed, officers shall notify their superior officer prior to the commencement of their tour of duty.

11.15 Use of Alcohol on Duty or in Uniform

A. Officers shall not consume intoxicating beverages while in uniform or on duty except in the performance of duty and while acting under proper and specific orders from a superior officer.

B. Officers shall not appear for duty, or be on duty while under the influence of intoxicants to any degree whatsoever, or with an odor of intoxicants on their breath.

11.16 Use of Alcohol Off Duty

Officers, while off duty, shall refrain from consuming intoxicating beverages to the extent that it results in impairment, intoxication, or obnoxious or offensive behavior which discredits them or the department, or renders the officers unfit to report for their next regular tour of duty.

11.17 Use of Tobacco

Officers, when in uniform, may use tobacco as long as (1) they are not in a formation, (2) they do not have to leave their assignment or post for the sole purpose of doing so, and (3) they are not engaged in traffic direction and control. When they are in direct contact with the public, officers must obtain permission to use tobacco from the public with whom they are in direct contact as a matter of courtesy.

11.18 Insubordination

Officers shall promptly obey any lawful orders of a superior officer. This will include orders relayed from a superior officer by an officer of the same or lesser rank.

11.19 Conflicting or Illegal Orders

11.19.1 Officers who are given an otherwise proper order which is in conflict with a previous order, rule, regulation or directive shall respectfully inform the superior officer issuing the order if it does not alter or retract the conflicting order, the order shall stand. Under these circumstances, the responsibility for the conflict shall be upon the superior officer. Officers shall obey the conflicting order and shall not be held responsible for disobedience of the order, rule regulation or directive previously issued.

11.19.2 Officers shall not obey any order which they know or should know that would require them to commit any illegal act. If in doubt as to the legality of an order, Officers shall request the issuing officer to clarify the order or to confer with higher authority.

11.20 Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards

Officers shall not solicit or accept from any person, business, or organization any gift (including money, tangible or intangible personal property, food beverage, loan promise, service or entertainment) for the benefit of the officers or the Department, if it may reasonably be inferred that the person, business or organization:

11.20.1 Seeks to influence action of an official nature or seeks to affect the performance or nonperformance of an official duty or

11.20.2 Has an interest which may be substantially affected directly or indirectly by the performance or nonperformance of an official duty.

11.21 Abuse of Position

Use of official position or Identification.

11.21.1 Officers shall not use their official position, official identification cards badge:

11.21.1.1 For personal or financial gain,

11.21.1.2 For obtaining privileges not otherwise available to them except in the performance of duty, or

11.21.1.3 For avoiding consequences of illegal acts. Officers shall not lend to another person their identification cards or badges or permit them to be photographed or reproduced without the approval of the Chief.

11.21.2 Use of Name, Photograph or Title.

11.21.2.1 Officers shall not authorize the use of their names, photographs, or official titles which identify them as officers, in connection with enterprise, without the approval of the Chief.

11.22 Endorsements and Referrals

Officers shall not recommend or suggest in any manner except in transaction of personal business, the employment or procurement of a particular product, professional service, or commercial service (such as an attorney, ambulance service, towing service, bondsman, mortician, etc.) In the case of ambulance or towing service, when such service is necessary and the person needing the service is unable or unwilling to procure it or requests assistance, officers shall proceed in accordance with established departmental procedures.

11.23 Identification

Officers shall carry their badges and identification cards on their persons at all times, except when impractical or dangerous to their safety or to an investigation. They shall furnish their name and badge number to any person requesting that information, when they are on duty or while holding themselves out as having an official capacity, except when the withholding of such information is necessary for the performance of police duties or is authorized by proper authority.

1.24 Citizen Complaints

Officers shall courteously and promptly record in writing any complaint made by a citizen against any officer or the Department. Officers may attempt to resolve the complaint, but shall never attempt to dissuade any citizen from a complaint against any officer or the Department. Officers

11.25 Courtesy

Officers shall be courteous to the public. Officers shall be tactful in the performance of their duties, shall control their tempers, and exercise the utmost patience and discretion, and shall not engage in argumentative discussions even in the face of extreme provocation. In the performance of their duties, officers shall not use coarse, violent, profane or insolent language or gestures, and shall not express any prejudice concerning race, religion, politics, national origin, lifestyle or similar personal characteristics.

11.26 Requests for Assistance

When any person applies for assistance or advice or makes complaints or reports, either by telephone or in person, all pertinent information will be obtained in an official and courteous manner and will be properly and judiciously acted upon consistent with established departmental procedures.

11.27 Associations

Officers shall avoid regular or continuous associations or dealings with persons whom they know, or should know are persons under criminal investigation or indictment, or who have a reputation in the community or the Department for present involvement in felonious or criminal behavior, except as necessary to the performance of official duties, or where unavoidable because of other personal relationships of the officers.

11.28 Visiting Prohibited Establishments

Officers shall not knowingly visit, enter or frequent a house of prostitution, gambling house, or establishment wherein the laws of the United States, the state, or the local jurisdiction are regularly violated except in the performance of duty or while acting under proper and specific orders from a superior officer.

11.29 Gambling

Officers shall not engage or participate in any form of illegal gambling at any time, except in the performance of duty and while acting under proper and specific orders from a superior officer.

11.30 Public Statements and Appearances

11.30.1 Officers shall not publicly criticize or ridicule the Department, its policies, or other officers by speech, writing, or other expression, where such speech, writing, or other expression is defamatory, obscene, unlawful, undermines the effectiveness of the Department, interferes with the maintenance of discipline, or is made with reckless disregard for truth or falsity.

11.30.2 Officers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any articles for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or a periodical, release or divulge investigative information, or any other matters of the Department while holding themselves out as representing the Department in such matters without proper authority. Officers may lecture on "police" or other related subjects only with the prior approval of the Chief.

11.31 Personal Appearance

11.31.1 Officers on duty shall wear uniforms or other clothing in accordance with established departmental procedures.

11.31.2 Except when acting under proper and specific orders from a superior officer, officers on duty shall maintain a neat well-groomed appearance and shall style their hair according to the following guidelines.

11.31.2.1 Male Officers

Hair must be clean, neat and combed. Hair shall not be worn longer than the top of the shirt collar at the back of the neck when standing with the head in a normal posture. The bulk or length of the hair shall not interfere with the normal wearing of all standard head gear.

11.31.2.1.1 Wigs or hair pieces are permitted if they conform to the above standards for natural hair.

11.31.2.1.2 Sideburns shall be neatly trimmed and rectangular in shape.

11.31.2.1.3 Officers shall be clean shaven except that they may have mustaches which do not extend below the upper lip line.

11.31.2.2 Female Officers

11.31.2.2.1 Hair must be clean, neat and combed. Hair shall not be worn longer than the top of the shirt collar at the back of the neck when standing with the head in a normal posture. The bulk or length of the hair shall not interfere with the normal wearing of all standard head gear.

11.31.2.2.2 Wigs or hairpieces are permitted if they conform to the above standards for natural hair.

11.32 Political Activity

Officers are prohibited from:

11.32.1 Using their official capacity to influence, interfere with or affect the results of an election;

11.32.2 Organizing, selling tickets to, or actively participating in a fund-raising function for a partisan political party or candidate;

11.32.3 Otherwise engaging in prohibited partisan activities on the federal, state, county or municipal level.

11.33 Labor Activity

11.33.1 Officers shall have the right to join labor organizations, but nothing shall compel the Department to recognize or to engage in collective bargaining with any such labor organizations except as provided by law.

11.33.2 Officers shall not engage in any strike. "Strike" includes the concerted failure to report for duty, willful absence from one's position, unauthorized holidays, sickness unsubstantiated by a physician's statement, the stoppage of work, or the abstinence in whole or in part from the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment for the purposes of inducing, influencing or coercing a change in conditions, compensation, rights, privileges or obligations of employment.

11.34 Payment of Debts

Officers shall not undertake any financial obligations which they know or should know they will be unable to meet, and shall pay all just debts when due. An isolated instance of financial irresponsibility will not be grounds for discipline except in unusually severe cases. However, repeated instances of financial difficulty may be cause for disciplinary action. Filing for a voluntary bankruptcy petition shall not, by itself, be cause for discipline. Financial difficulties stemming from unforeseen medical expenses or personal disaster shall not be cause for discipline, provided that a good faith effort to settle all accounts is being undertaken. Officers shall not co-sign a note for any superior officer.

11.35 Residence

Officers shall reside within the geographical area as required by the Town.

11.36 Dissemination of Information

Officers shall treat the official business of the Department as confidential. Information regarding official business shall be disseminated only to those for whom it is intended in accordance with established departmental procedures. Officers may remove or copy official records or reports from a police installation only in accordance with established departmental procedures. Officers shall not divulge the identity of persons giving confidential information except as authorized by proper authority.

11.37 Intervention

11.37.1 Officers shall not interfere with cases being handled by other officers of the Department or by any other governmental agency unless:

11.37.1.1 Ordered to intervene by a superior officer, or

11.37.1.2 The intervening officer believes beyond a reasonable doubt that a manifest in justice would result from failure to take immediate action.

11.37.2 Officers shall not undertake investigation or other official action not part of their regular duties without obtaining permission from their superior officers unless the exigencies of the situation require immediate police action.

11.38 Departmental Reports

Officers shall submit all necessary reports on time and in accordance with established departmental procedures. Reports submitted by officers shall be truthful, legible and complete, and no officer shall knowingly enter or cause to be entered any inaccurate, false, or improper information.

11.39 Processing Property and Evidence

Property or evidence which has been discovered, gathered or received in connection with departmental responsibilities will be processed in accordance with established departmental procedures. Officers shall not convert to their own use, manufacture, conceal, falsify, destroy, remove, tamper with or withhold any property or evidence in connection with an investigation or other police action, except in accordance with established departmental procedures.

11.40 Abuse of Process

Officers shall not make false accusations of a criminal or traffic charge.

11.41 Use of Departmental Equipment

Officers shall utilize equipment only for its intended purpose, in accordance with established departmental procedures, and shall not abuse, damage or lose Department equipment. All Department equipment issued to officers shall be maintained in proper order.

11.42 Operating Vehicles

Officers shall operate official vehicles in a careful and prudent manner, and shall obey all laws and all departmental orders pertaining to such operation. Loss or suspension of any driving license shall be reported to the Chief of Police immediately.

11.43 Carrying Firearms

Officers shall carry firearms in accordance with law and established departmental procedures.

11.44 Truthfulness

Upon the order of the Chief, the Chief's designee or a superior officer, officers shall truthfully answer all questions specifically directed and narrowly related to the scope of employment and operations of the Department which may be asked of them.

11.45 Use of Medical Examinations, Photographs and Lineups.

Upon the order of the Chief or the Chief's designee, officers shall submit to any medical, ballistics, chemical or other tests, photographs, or lineups. All procedures carried out under this

subsection shall be specifically directed and narrowly related to a particular internal investigation being conducted by the Department.

11.46 Financial Disclosure

Upon the order of the Chief or the Chief's designee, officers shall submit financial statements in accordance with departmental procedures in connection with a complaint in which this information is material to the investigation.

11.47 Treatment of Persons in Custody

Officers shall not mistreat persons who are in their custody. Officers shall handle such persons in accordance with the law and departmental procedures.

11.48 Use of Force

Officers shall not use more force in any situation than is reasonably necessary under the circumstances. Officers shall use force only in accordance with law and departmental procedures and shall make a report of such use of force to the Chief of Police.

11.49 Use of Weapons

Officers shall not use or handle weapons in a careless or imprudent manner. Officers shall use weapons in accordance with law and departmental procedures.

11.50 Arrest, Search and Seizure

Officers shall not make any arrest, search or seizure which they know or should know is not in accordance with law and departmental procedures.

ARTICLE XII GENERAL RULES

12.1 All members of the Police Department shall be subject to the Rules and Regulations. Members of the Department are not merely employees, but are officers of this State and Town charged with specific duties in maintaining public order and administering justice. Therefore, every member's sole responsibility must be to the Chief of Police, and through him/her to the public.

12.2 It is the duty of the Police Department and the members of the Force, at all times of the day and night, to protect life and property, prevent crime, detect and arrest offenders, preserve the public peace and enforce all laws and ordinances over which the Police Department has jurisdiction.

12.3 A Police Officer, regularly performing patrol duty, shall proceed to his/her designated assignment or relieving point without unnecessary delay, inspect his/her assigned area immediately, remain constantly alert and observant, note any condition thereon requiring police attention and take appropriate action.

12.3.1 He/she is charged with the enforcement of all laws and ordinances, especially with those relating to public morals, vice, gambling, intoxicating liquors; also with the proper condition and maintenance of departmental equipment, traffic control equipment of all types, street lights, public highway, curb and sidewalk conditions within the boundaries of the post of which he/she is assigned; he/she shall promptly report through official channels any condition requiring attention and shall provide safeguards when necessary.

12.4 A Supervisory Officer on patrol is charged with the enforcement of all laws and ordinances, especially those relating to public morals, vice, gambling, intoxicating liquors and the enforcement of Rules and Regulations. He/she is also charged with the proper condition and maintenance of departmental equipment, traffic control equipment of all types, street lights, public highway, curb and sidewalk conditions within the command to which he/she is assigned,

and he/she shall promptly report through official channels any condition requiring attention and shall provide safeguards when necessary.

12.5 A member of the Force or Department shall be fit for duty and subject to duty at all times except when on sick report. He/she shall not engage in any other occupation except when suspended from duty without pay; or when having filed his/her application for retirement, he/she is on continuous vacation or other authorized leave, or when having made application on the prescribed form, he/she has been granted a work permit.

12.6 Members of the Force shall be held strictly accountable for all information acquired by them on or off duty, regarding all suspicious persons or places within the Town.

12.7 A member of the Force or Department shall treat as confidential the official business of the Police Department. He/she shall not talk for publication, nor be interviewed, nor make public speeches, nor shall he/she impart information relating to the official business of the Department to anyone except under due process of law and as directed, or with the permission of the Chief of Police.

12.8 A member of the Department found guilty of violating a rule or regulation of the Department, or of the provisions of any order or orders, or of disobedience of orders, or of cowardice, or of intoxication while on duty, or while in uniform, or of conduct unbecoming an officer, or of making a false official communication, record or statement, or a member of the Department convicted in a court having criminal jurisdiction, may be subject to dismissal or other disciplinary action.

12.9 Disorder or neglect to the prejudice of good order, efficiency or discipline, though not specifically mentioned in the Rules and Regulations, shall be taken cognizance of by the Department, and members of the Department found guilty thereof will be punished at the discretion of the Town Board.

ARTICLE XIII PENALTIES

13.1 A member of the department found guilty of violating the rules and regulations of the department is subject to one of the following actions described in Section 155 of the Town Law of the State of New York:

13.1.1 Reprimand

13.1.2 Fine

13.1.3 Suspension - with or without pay

13.1.4 Dismissal or removal from the force or department

13.2 Disciplinary actions and penalties resulting therefrom shall be determined by the Chief of Police, the Town Board and/or any other body as proscribed in any contractual agreement.

ARTICLE XIV DEFINITIONS

14.1 The following definitions govern the use of these terms in the Rules and Regulations of the Department:

TOWN BOARD: The Supervisor and the Council of the Town of Bethlehem shall constitute the Town Board thereof.

DEPARTMENT: The term "police department" or "department" means the Department of Police of the Incorporated Town of Bethlehem, Albany County, New York and such term includes the term "police force".

FORCE: The term "police force" or "force" includes all members of the Police Department who have taken the oath of office and who possess the police power of arrest as well as non-sworn communications, clerical and other specialty personnel.

OFFICER: A sworn member of the police force possessing the power of arrest.

MEMBER: Any employee of the Department.

PROFESSIONAL: Shall mean conduct in accordance with the tenets of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics which is a part of these rules.

PRONOUNS: All pronouns include the masculine and feminine gender unless otherwise specified.

SUPERIOR OFFICER: A person holding a higher supervisory or command position.

SUPERVISORY OFFICER: Any member, other than the Chief of Police, who is authorized to direct the activities of others.

DEPUTY CHIEF: A superior officer.

COMMANDER/LIEUTENANT: A superior officer.

SERGEANT: A supervisory officer.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT: A supervisory officer.

DETECTIVE SUPERVISOR: A supervisory officer.

POLICE OFFICER OR DETECTIVE: An officer.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPERVISOR: A supervisory member

TELECOMMUNICATOR: A communications specialist

CIVILIAN: A non-sworn, non-communications staff member.

ON DUTY: Hours specifically assigned to a member or any time involved serving during a police emergency even though a member was not specifically assigned.

OFF DUTY: All hours other than when on duty.

LAWS AND ORDINANCES: Those laws, both state and local, and ordinances, the enforcement of which is the responsibility of the Department.

APPENDIX % - TOWN OF BETHLEHEM EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS

The following Code of Ethics applies to all Town of Bethlehem employees, and is part of the [Employee Policy Handbook](#).

Town of Bethlehem Code of Ethics

State law requires each town in New York State to adopt a code of ethics. The Town of Bethlehem’s Code of Ethics (“Code”) establishes the standards of ethical conduct by which all employees and officers of the Town are expected to conduct themselves. Its purpose is to enhance public confidence and respect for Town government by protecting your integrity as well as the integrity of Town government.

This Guide provides general information concerning the Town Code. For specific information concerning the Code, please refer to the Town of Bethlehem Local Law Chapter 16.

The Code applies to any officer or employee of the Town. An “officer” includes any paid or unpaid official of the Town. An “employee” is any person receiving a salary or wage from the Town.

Standards of Conduct

Outside Employment

If you are an officer or employee of the Town you cannot engage in outside employment that is in conflict with your official duties. For example, you must refrain from outside employment that requires (1) more than sporadic recusal or abstention when performing your official duties (2) the disclosure of confidential information or (3) the representation of persons or organizations in matters where the Town is a party.

Future Employment

Job offers and solicitations – Officers or employees cannot solicit or accept a private, post-government employment opportunity with any person or organization that has a matter requiring the exercise of discretion pending before them, while that matter is pending or within 30 days following the final disposition of the matter. This applies to you whether you act individually or as a member of a board.

Post-employment Restrictions

- One year ban – No officer or employee may, for one year after serving as a municipal officer or employee, represent or render services to a person or organization in a matter that involves the exercise of discretion before the Town office, board or department for which he/she served.
- Lifetime ban – No officer or employee may, at any time after serving as a municipal officer or employee, represent or render services to a person or organization in connection with a transaction in which he/she personally and substantially participated as a Town officer or employee.

Personal Representations and Claims

The Code does not prohibit an officer or employee from representing himself/herself or his or her spouse or minor children before the Town or asserting a claim against the Town on behalf of himself/herself or on behalf of his/her spouse or minor children.

Use of Municipal Resources

If you are a town official or employee you cannot use or permit the use of municipal resources for personal purposes. Municipal resources include not only money but also Town personnel,

vehicles, equipment, materials, supplies or other property. Town policy authorizes the occasional and incidental use of telephone and computers for family and personal matters. Consult the personnel manual or your supervisor regarding questions relating to the lawful use of Town resources.

Nepotism

Effective July 2, 2012, if you are a Town officer or employee you cannot participate in any decision to appoint, hire, promote, discipline or discharge a relative for any position within the Town. A “relative” is your spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, stepsibling, sibling’s spouse, child, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin or household member, and individuals having any of these relationships to your spouse.

No officer or employee may directly supervise a relative in the performance of his/her official duties.

However, the Ethics Code provides that any officer and employee serving the Town at the time the Code became effective would not be prevented from continuing to serve due to this provision. In these existing cases, certain oversight provisions apply to ensure fair treatment.

The appointment of any known relative of a Town officer or employee will be forwarded to the Human Resource Department for final review to assure compliance with hiring guidelines.

Political Solicitation and Activity

An officer or employee may not use his/her official position to compel or induce another Town officer or employee to make a political contribution. Nor can they take any employment or personnel action against any officer or employee or any applicant for such positions due to their political contributions or lack thereof.

No employee shall engage in political campaign activity during his/her assigned workday. In addition, no officer or employee shall use Town resources for any political campaign or political activities.

Gifts

No officer or employee shall solicit, accept or receive a gift of any value. There are certain limited and specific exceptions to this prohibition. These include:

- Gifts from a person with a family or personal relationship to the officer or employee when the circumstances make it clear that such relationship (not the recipients status with the Town) is the motivating factor for the gift
- Gifts given on special occasions (marriage, illness, retirement) which are modest, reasonable and customary
- Unsolicited items of little intrinsic value (e.g. pens, pencils, note pads)
- Meals or refreshments provided when an officer or employee is a speaker or participant at a professional or educational program or meeting related to their job or office and such meals/refreshments are provided to all participants
- Contributions to political candidates or parties

Investments and Conflicts of Interest

No officer or employee may acquire investments that would impair his/her independence of judgment in the exercise of his/her official duties or, would require more than sporadic recusal or abstention when exercising his/her official duties.

Confidential Information

No officer or employee who acquires confidential information in the course of his/her official duties may disclose or use such information unless required by law or in the course of one’s official duties.

Enforcement

Any officer or employee who violates this Code may be censured, fined, suspended or removed from office or employment.

Getting Information or Advice

Town officers and employees are encouraged to seek an advisory opinion when they are uncertain if their conduct may violate the Code. Such advisory opinion will remain confidential to the extent permitted by law, except in the case where the person requesting the advisory opinion chooses to appeal the Ethics Board decision to the Town Board.

Requests for advice should be addressed to:

Town of Bethlehem Board of Ethics

Town Hall

Delmar, New York 12054